

Sylvio J. Scorza

GEORGE ADAM SMITH'S
WORKS ON THE PROPHETS

THE BOOKS OF ZEPHANIAH, NAHUM,
HABAKKUK, OBADIAH, HAGGAI, ZECHARIAH,
MALACHI, JOEL, JONAH

VOLUME II

GEORGE ADAM SMITH'S
WORKS ON THE PROPHETS

LIST OF NEW AND REVISED EDITIONS

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH. Vol. I

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH. Vol. II

THE BOOK OF THE TWELVE PROPHETS. Vol. I.

THE BOOK OF THE TWELVE PROPHETS. Vol. II

THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

THE BOOK OF THE TWELVE PROPHETS

COMMONLY CALLED THE MINOR

IN TWO VOLUMES—VOLUME II

ZEPHANIAH, NAHUM, HABAKKUK, OBADIAH, HAGGAI,
ZECHARIAH, MALACHI, JOEL, JONAH

BY

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WITH INTRODUCTIONS

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FROM THE PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

THE first volume on the Twelve Prophets dealt with the three who belonged to the Eighth Century: Amos, Hosea and Micah. This second volume includes the other nine books arranged in chronological order: Zephaniah, Nahum and Habakkuk, of the Seventh Century; Obadiah, of the Exile; Haggai, Zechariah i-viii, 'Malachi' and Joel, of the Persian Period, 538-331; 'Zechariah' ix-xiv, and the Book of Jonah, of the Greek Period, which began in 332, the date of Alexander's Syrian campaign.

The same plan has been followed as in Volume I. A historical introduction is offered to each period. To each prophet are given, first a chapter of critical introduction, and then one or more chapters of exposition. A complete translation has been furnished, with critical and explanatory notes. All questions of date and of text, and nearly all of interpretation, have been confined to the introductions and the notes, so that those who consult the volume only for expository purposes will find the exposition unencumbered by the discussion of technical points.

The necessity of including within one volume so many prophets, scattered over more than three centuries, and each requiring a separate introduction, has

reduced the space available for the application of their teaching to modern life. But this is the less to be regretted, that the contents of the nine books before us are not so applicable to our own day, as we found their greater predecessors to be. On the other hand, they form a more varied introduction to Old Testament Criticism, while, by the long range of time which they cover, and the many stages of religion to which they belong, they afford a wider view of the development of prophecy. Let us look for a little at these two points.

1. To Old Testament Criticism these books furnish valuable introduction—some of them, like Obadiah, Joel, and ‘Zechariah’ ix–xiv, by the great variety of opinion that has prevailed as to their dates or their relation to other prophets with whom they have passages in common; some, like Zechariah and ‘Malachi,’ by their relation to the Law, in the light of modern theories of the origin of the latter; and some, like Joel and Jonah, by the question whether we are to read them as history, or as allegories of history, or as apocalypse. It has, therefore, been necessary to make the critical introductions full and detailed. The enormous differences of opinion as to the dates of some must start the suspicion of arbitrariness, unless there be included in each case a history of the development of criticism, so as to exhibit to the English reader the principles and the evidence of fact upon which that criticism is based. I am convinced that what is chiefly required just now by the devout student of the Bible is the opportunity to judge for himself how far Old Testament Criticism is an adult science; with

what amount of reasonableness it has been prosecuted ; how gradually its conclusions have been reached, how jealously contested ; and how far, amid the many varieties of opinion which must always exist with regard to facts so ancient and questions so obscure, there has been progress towards agreement upon the leading problems. But, besides the accounts of past criticism given in this volume, the reader will find in each case an independent attempt to arrive at a conclusion. This has not always been successful. A number of points have been left in doubt ; and even where results have been stated with some degree of positiveness, the reader need scarcely be warned that many of these must necessarily be provisional. But, in looking back from the close of this work upon the discussions it contains, I am more than ever convinced of the extreme probability of most of the conclusions. Among these are the following : that the correct interpretation of Habakkuk is to be found in the direction of the position to which Budde's ingenious proposal has been carried on pages 121 ff. with reference to Egypt ; that the most of Obadiah is to be dated from the sixth century ; that Malachi is an anonymous work from the eve of Ezra's reforms ; that Joel follows Malachi ; and that Zechariah ix-xiv has been rightly assigned by Stade to the early years of the Greek Period. I have ventured to contest Kusters' theory that there was no return of Jewish exiles under Cyrus, and am the more disposed to believe his argument inconclusive, not only upon a review of the reasons I have stated in Chap. XVI, but on this ground also, that many of its chief adherents in this country and

Germany have so modified it as virtually to give up its main contention. I think, too, there can be little doubt as to the substantial authenticity of Zephaniah ii (except the verses on Moab and Ammon) and iii. 1-13, of Habakkuk ii. 5 ff., and of the whole of Haggai ; or as to the character of the lyric piece in Zechariah ii and the intrusion of Malachi ii. 11-13*a*. On these and smaller points the reader will find full discussion at the proper places.

The text of the nine prophets treated in this volume has presented even more difficulties than that of the three treated in Volume I.

2. But the critical and textual value of our nine books is far exceeded by the historical. Each exhibits a development of Hebrew prophecy of the greatest interest. From this point of view, indeed, the volume might be entitled 'The Passing of the Prophet.' For throughout our nine books we see the spirit and the style of the classic prophecy of Israel gradually dissolving into other forms of religious thought and feeling. The clear start from the facts of the prophet's day, the ancient truths about Yahweh and Israel, and the direct appeal to the conscience of the prophet's contemporaries, are not always given, or when given are mingled, coloured and warped by other religious interests, both present and future, which are even powerful enough to shake the ethical absolutism of the older prophets. With Nahum and Obadiah the ethical is entirely missed in the presence of the claims—and we cannot deny that they were natural claims—of the long-suffering nation's hour of revenge upon her heathen tyrants. With Zephaniah prophecy,

still austere-ly ethical, passes under the shadow of apocalypse ; and the future is solved, not upon purely historical lines, but by the intervention of supernatural elements. With Habakkuk the ideals of the older prophets encounter the shock of the facts of experience : we have the prophet as sceptic. Upon the other margin of the Exile, Haggai and Zechariah (i-viii), although they are as practical as any of their predecessors, exhibit the influence of the exilic developments of ritual, angelology, and apocalypse. God appears further off from Zechariah than from the prophets of the eighth century, and in need of mediators, human and superhuman. With Zechariah the priest has displaced the prophet, and it is very remarkable that no place is found for the latter beside *the two sons of oil*, the political and priestly heads of the community, who, according to the Fifth Vision, stand in the presence of God and between them feed the religious life of Israel. Nearly sixty years later Malachi exhibits the working of Prophecy within the Law, and begins to employ the didactic style of the later Rabbinism. Joel starts, like any older prophet, from the facts of his own day, but these hurry him at once into apocalypse ; he calls, as thoroughly as any of his predecessors, to repentance, but under the imminence of the Day of the Lord, with its supernatural terrors, he mentions no special sin and enforces no single virtue. The civic and personal ethics of the earlier prophets are absent. In the Greek Period, the oracles now numbered from the ninth to the fourteenth chapters of the Book of Zechariah repeat the exulting revenge of Nahum and Obadiah, without

xvi FROM THE PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

the strong style or hold upon history which the former exhibits, and show us prophecy further enwrapped in apocalypse. But in the Book of Jonah, though parable and not history, we see a recovery and expansion of the best elements of prophecy. God's character and Israel's mission to the world are revealed in the spirit of Hosea and the Seer of the Exile, with the tenderness, insight, and even humour of classic prophecy. These qualities raise the Book of Jonah, though probably the latest of our Twelve, to the highest rank. No book is more worthy to stand by Isaiah xl-lv ; none is nearer to the New Testament.

All this gives unity to the study of prophets so far separate in time, and so very distinct in character, from each other. From Zephaniah to Jonah, or over a period of three centuries, they illustrate the dissolution of Prophecy and its passage into other forms of religion.

FREE CHURCH COLLEGE,
GLASGOW, 1898.

PREFACE TO THE NEW AND REVISED EDITION

AFTER thirty years' steady circulation of the First Edition of 1898, I have revised this in the light of all the criticism which has since then been brought to bear on its subjects. In particular the Hebrew text has been carefully re-translated with the help of recent metrical analyses of it. See the Preface to the New Edition of Volume I.

GEORGE ADAM SMITH.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN,
September, 1928.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- A.J.S.L. = American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature.
A.T. = Alte Testament.
Enc. Bibl. = Encyclopædia Biblica.
Hist. Geog. or H.G.H.L. = Historical Geography of the Holy Land.
J.B.L. = Journal of Biblical Literature.
K.A.T.³ = Die Keilinschriften und das A.T. 3rd ed.
LXX. = The Septuagint or Greek Version of the O.T.
S.B.O.T. = Haupt's Sacred Books of the Old Testament (Polychrome Bible).
Syr. = Syriac Version of the O.T.,
Targ. = Targum.
Vulg. = Vulgate.
Z.A.T.W. = Zeitschrift für Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft.

**INTRODUCTION TO THE PROPHETS OF THE
SEVENTH CENTURY**

CHAPTER I

THE SEVENTH CENTURY BEFORE CHRIST

THE three prophets who were treated in the first volume of this work belonged to the eighth century before Christ : if Micah lived into the seventh his labours were over by 675. The next group of our twelve, also three in number, Zephaniah, Nahum, and Habakkuk, did not appear till after 630. To make our study continuous¹ we must now sketch the course of Israel's history between the two groups.

In another volume of this series,² some account was given of the religious progress of Israel from Isaiah and the Deliverance of Jerusalem in 701 to Jeremiah and the Fall of Jerusalem in 587. Isaiah's strength was bent upon establishing the inviolableness of Şion. Şion, he said, should not be taken, and the people, though cut to their roots, should remain planted in their own land, the stock of a noble nation in the latter days. But Jeremiah predicted the ruin both of City and Temple, summoned Jerusalem's enemies against her in the name of her God, and counselled his people to submit to them. This reversal of the prophetic ideal had a twofold reason. In the first place the moral condition of Israel was worse in 600 B.C. than it had been in 700 ; another century had shown how

¹ See Vol. I, p. viii.

² *Isaiah xl-lxvi*, ch. ii.

much the nation needed the penalty and purgation of exile. But secondly, however the inviolableness of Jerusalem had been required in the interests of pure religion in 701, religion had now to show that it was independent even of Sion and of Israel's political survival. Our three prophets of the eighth century (as well as Isaiah himself) had indeed preached a gospel which implied this, but it was reserved to Jeremiah to prove that the existence of state and temple was not indispensable to faith in God, and to explain the ruin of Jerusalem, not merely as a well-merited penance, but as the condition of a more spiritual intercourse between God and His people.

It is our duty to trace the course of events through the seventh century, which led to this change of the standpoint of prophecy, and which moulded the messages especially of Jeremiah's contemporaries, Zephaniah, Nahum and Habakkuk. We may divide the century into three periods: *First*, that of the Reaction and Persecution under Manasseh and Amon, from 695 or 690 to 639, during which prophecy was silent or, anonymous; *Second*, that of the Early Years of Josiah, 639 to 625, near the end of which we meet with the young Jeremiah and Zephaniah; *Third*, the Rest of the Century, 625 to 600, covering the Decline and Fall of Nineveh, and the prophets Nahum and Habakkuk, with an addition carrying on the history to the Fall of Jerusalem in 587-586.

I. REACTION UNDER MANASSEH AND AMON (695 ?-639)

Jerusalem was delivered in 701, and the Assyrians kept away from Palestine for twenty-three years.¹

¹ It is uncertain whether Hezekiah was an Assyrian vassal after 701, ~~as~~ his successor Manasseh is recorded to have been in 676.

Judah had peace, and Hezekiah was free to devote his latter days to the work of purifying the worship of his people. What he exactly achieved is uncertain. The historian imputes to him the removal of the high places, the destruction of all Maşseboth and Asheras, and of the brazen serpent.¹ That his measures were drastic is probable from the opinions of Isaiah, who was their inspiration, and proved by the reaction which they provoked when Hezekiah died. The *removal* of the high places and the concentration of the national worship within the Temple would be the more easy that the provincial sanctuaries had been devastated by the Assyrian invasion, and that the shrine of Yahweh was glorified by the raising of the siege of 701.

While the first of Isaiah's great postulates for the future, the inviolableness of Şion, had been fulfilled, the second, the reign of a righteous prince in Israel, seemed doomed to disappointment. Hezekiah died early in the seventh century,² and was succeeded by his son Manasseh, a boy of twelve, who appears to have been captured by the party whom his father had opposed. The few years' peace, for peace in Israel was always dangerous to the health of the higher religion, the interests of those who had suffered from the reforms, the inevitable reaction which a rigorous puritanism provokes—these reversed the religious fortunes of Israel. Isaiah's and Micah's predictions of the final overthrow of Assyria seemed falsified, when in 681 Asarhaddon succeeded Sennacherib, and in 678 swept the long absent armies back upon Syria. Sidon was destroyed, and twenty-two princes of Palestine yielded their tribute to the conqueror. Manasseh was one, and his

¹ 2 Kings xviii. 4.

² The exact date is quite uncertain; 695 is suggested on the chronological table prefixed to this volume, but it may have been 690 or 685

political homage may have brought him, as it brought Ahaz, within the infection of foreign idolatries.¹ Everything worked for the revival of that eclectic paganism which Hezekiah had striven to stamp out. The high places were rebuilt; altars were erected to Baal, with the sacred pole of Asherah, as in the time of Ahab;² shrines to the *host of heaven* defiled the courts of Yahweh's house; there was a recrudescence of sooth-saying, divination, and traffic with the dead.

But it was all very different from the secure and sunny temper which Amos had encountered in Northern Israel.³ The terrible Assyrian invasions had come between. Life could not feel so stable. More destructive had been the social poisons which our prophets described as sapping the constitution of Israel for three generations. The rural simplicity was corrupted by those economic changes which Micah bewails. With the ousting of the old families from the soil, traditions, memories, and habits must have been broken, which had preserved the people's presence of mind in days of disaster, and carried them through so long a trial as the Syrian wars. Nor could the blood of Israel have run so pure after the luxury and licentiousness

¹ Cf. McCurdy, *History, Prophecy and the Monuments*, § 799.

² Stade (*Gesch. des Volkes Israel*, I, pp. 627 f.) denies to Manasseh the reconstruction of the high places, the Baal altars and the Asheras, for he does not believe that Hezekiah had succeeded in destroying these. He takes 2 Kings xxi. 3 as a late interpolation necessary to reconcile the tradition that Hezekiah's reforms had been in the spirit of Deuteronomy, with the fact that there were still high places in the land when Josiah began his reforms. Stade takes the rest of 2 Kings xxi. 26 ff. as also an interpolation, but unlike ver. 3 an accurate account of Manasseh's institutions, because it is corroborated by the account of Josiah's reforms, 2 Kings xxiii. Stade discusses this passage in *Z.A.T.W.*, 1886, pp. 186 ff.

³ See Vol. I. In addition to the reasons of the change given above, we must remember that we are now treating, not of Northern Israel, but of the more stern and sullen Judæans.

described by Hosea and Isaiah. The obligations of commerce, the greed to be rich, the distress among the poor, strained the joyous temper of that nation of peasants' sons, whom we met with Amos, and shattered the nerves of their rulers. There is no word of fighting in Manasseh's days, nor of revolt against the tyrant. Perhaps the intervening puritanism, which failed to give the people a permanent faith, had awakened within them a new conscience.

At all events there is now no more *ease in Sion*, but restless fear, driving to excesses of religious zeal. We do not read of the country festivals of the previous century, nor of the careless pride of that sudden wealth which built palaces and loaded the altar of Yahweh with hecatombs. The patriotism, which kept ritual in touch with clean national issues, has vanished. The popular religion is sullen and exasperated. It takes the form of sacrifices of cruelty and lust. Children are passed through the fire to Moloch, and the Temple is defiled by the orgies of those who abuse their bodies to propitiate a foreign and a brutal god.¹

But the consequence of a religion whose nerves are on edge is persecution, and this raged all the earlier years of Manasseh. The adherents of the purer faith were slaughtered, and Jerusalem drenched² with innocent blood. *Her own sword*, says Jeremiah, *devoured the prophets like a destroying lion*.³

It is significant that all that has come down to us from this 'killing time' is anonymous;⁴ we do not meet with our next group of public prophets till

¹ 2 Kings xxi, xxiii.

² *Filled from mouth to mouth* (2 Kings xxi. 16).

³ Jer. ii. 30.

⁴ We have already seen several critics assign to this period parts of the Book of Micah. See Vol. I, pp. 395 f.

Manasseh and his like-minded son have passed away. Yet prophecy was not wholly stifled. Voices were raised to predict the exile and destruction of the nation. *Yahweh spake by His servants* ;¹ while others wove into the prophecies of an Amos, a Hosea or an Isaiah some application of the old principles to the new circumstances. It is possible that the doubtful passage in the Book of Amos, v. 26 f., which imputes to Israel as a whole the worship of astral deities from Assyria, is to be assigned to the reign of Manasseh. In its present position it looks like an intrusion : nowhere else does Amos charge his generation with serving foreign gods ; and in all the history of Israel we could not find a more suitable period for so specific a charge than the days when into the central sanctuary of the national worship images were introduced of the host of heaven, and the nation was, in consequence, threatened with exile.²

In times of persecution the documents of the suffering

¹ 2 Kings xxi. 10 ff.

² Whether the apostrophes to Yahweh as Maker of the heavens, their hosts and all the powers of nature (Amos iv. 13, v. 8, 9, ix. 5, 6), are also to be attributed to Manasseh's reign is more doubtful. Yet the following facts are to be observed : that these passages are also (though to a less degree than v. 26 f.) parenthetical ; that their language seems of a later cast than that of the time of Amos (see Vol. I, pp. 214, 215 : though here evidence is adduced to show that the late features are probably post-exilic) ; and that Yahweh is expressly named as the *Maker* of certain of the stars. Similarly, when Mohammed seeks to condemn the worship of the heavenly bodies, he insists that God is their Maker. Koran, Sur. 41, 37 : ' To the signs of His Omnipotence belong night and day, sun and moon ; but do not pray to sun or moon, for God hath created them.' Sur. 53, 50 : ' Because He is the Lord of Sirius.' On the other side, see Driver's *Joel and Amos* (Cambridge Bible for Schools Series), 1897, pp. 118 f., 189.

How deeply Manasseh had planted in Israel the worship of the heavenly host may be seen from the survival of the latter through the reforms of Josiah and the destruction of Jerusalem (Jer. vii. 18, viii, xlv ; Ezek. viii. Cf. Stade, *Gesch. des V. Israel*, I, pp. 629 ff.).

faith have ever been revered and guarded with zeal. It is not improbable that the prophets, driven from public life, gave themselves to the arrangement of the national scriptures; and some critics date from Manasseh's reign the weaving of the two earliest documents of the Pentateuch into one continuous book of history.¹ The Book of Deuteronomy forms a problem by itself. The legislation which composes the bulk of it² appears to have been found among the Temple archives at the end of our period, and presented to Josiah as an old and forgotten work (621 B.C.). There is no reason to charge with fraud those who made the presentation by affirming that they invented the book. They were priests of Jerusalem, but the book is written by members of the prophetic party, and ostensibly in the interests of the rural priests. It betrays no tremor of the persecutions of Manasseh's reign; it does not hint at the distinction, then for the first time apparent, between a false and a true Israel. But it does draw another distinction, familiar to the eighth century, between the true and the false prophets. The political and spiritual premisses of the doctrine of the book were all present by the end of the reign of Hezekiah, and it is improbable that his reforms, which were in the main those of Deuteronomy, were not

¹ The Yahwist and Elohist into the closely mortised JE. Stade indeed assigns to the period of Manasseh Israel's first acquaintance with the Babylonian cosmogonies and myths which led to that reconstruction of them in the spirit of her own religion which we find in the Yahwist portions of the beginning of Genesis (*Gesch. des V. Isr.*, I, pp. 630 ff.). But it may be doubted (1) whether the reign of Manasseh affords time for this assimilation, and (2) whether it was likely that Assyrian and Babylonian theology could make so lasting an impression upon the purer faith of Israel at a time when the latter stood in sharp hostility to all foreign influences and was so bitterly persecuted by the parties in Israel who had succumbed to these influences.

² Chs. v-xxvi, xxviii.

accompanied by some code, or by some appeal to the fountain of law in Israel.

But whether the Book of Deuteronomy now existed or not, there were those in the nation who through the dark days between Hezekiah and Josiah laid up its truth in their hearts and were ready to assist the latter monarch in his public enforcement of it.

While these things happened within Judah, very great events were taking place beyond her borders. Asarhaddon of Assyria (681-668) was a monarch of long purposes and thorough plans. Though the force he dispatched to Egypt in 676 was defeated,¹ Asarhaddon was successful with a second campaign in 671-670 as far as Memphis, and the Delta became an Assyrian province. When Taharḳo from the south recovered it Asarhaddon prepared a third expedition, which on his death in 668 was carried on by his successor Ashurbanipal. This king, within a few years had twice to drive back the restless Taharḳo into Ethiopia, suppress Egyptian revolts and then capture Thebes from Taharḳo's successor. The fall of Thebes resounded through Western Asia—we shall hear an echo of it in Nahum²—but failed to make permanent the Assyrian power in Egypt, for about 660 or possibly later Psametik, the first Pharaoh of that name, asserted his independence.³ Sidon had been reduced by Asarhaddon in 678,⁴ and Tyre, after a prolonged blockade, had yielded to Ashurbanipal in 668, in which year the Palestinian

¹ *Babylonian Chronicle*, IV, 10, 16; see Winckler, *K.A.T.*³, p. 88; Rogers, *Cuneiform Parallels to the O.T.*, p. 217.

² Nahum iii. 8.

³ 'About 660 (but this is uncertain),' W. Max Muller in *Enc. Bibl.*, col. 1245. Guthe, *Gesch.*, puts the date as late as 'about 645.'

⁴ Rogers, *Cuneiform Parallels*, pp. 353 f. *Hexagonal Prism*, Nebi Yunus Inscr., col. 1.

vassals of Assyria had to furnish Ashurbanipal for his campaign against Egypt in 668, with 'men and ships in addition to the customary tribute.'¹ They remained quiet for some years after Psameṭik's revolt. But when Babylon revolted from Assyria, 652-648, a number of them, with Psameṭik, declared against Assyria. Ashurbanipal having quelled the revolt in Babylon and Elam, marched against certain tribes in Northern Arabia, Edom, Moab and Hauran, as well as Phœnicians in Usu and Akka about 645. Thereafter, till the end of his reign in 626, he seems to have had no trouble in controlling his vast empire.

'Manasseh of Judah' appears in the Assyrian annals twice as an Assyrian tributary in 677-676 as 'king of the city of Judah,' paying homage, along with twenty-one other princes, to Asarhaddon,² and as one of the same group who contributed to the forces of Ashurbanipal against Egypt in 668.³ But among the states punished by him about 645 Judah is not mentioned, and therefore Manasseh probably still remained submissive. It has been supposed that the historical fact underlying the Jewish chronicler's account of Manasseh's captivity in Babylon is that in order to clear himself of complicity on the revolt of his neighbours, from 652 onwards, Manasseh paid homage in person to Ashurbanipal when the latter was at last

¹ L. W. King, *Enc. Bibl.*, col. 372 f.; cf. Winckler, *K.A.T.*³, p. 87. G. Smith, *Records of the Past*, 1st series, I, 62, does not give Manasseh's name.

² C. H. W. Johns, *Enc. Bibl.*, col. 1332; cf. H. F. Talbot, *Records of the Past*, 1st series, III, 107 (Kouyunyik Inscr. of Asarhaddon now in British Museum), and Winckler, *K.A.T.*³, p. 87. Col. v. of the 2nd Nebi Yunus Inscr. of Asarhaddon (lines 11-26) records a review of the twenty-two kings apparently at Nineveh, Talbot, *op. cit.*, 120. On 'City of Judah' see the present writer's *Jerusalem*, Vol. I, p. 268.

³ See note 1 above.

victorious and was residing in Babylon.¹ But it is equally possible to believe that, as the Chronicler says, Manasseh's temporary appearance in Babylon was an enforced one, and that this took place earlier. Asarhaddon's annals seem to imply that the twenty-two kings of Syria and the Levant, of whom Manasseh was one, appeared before him at Nineveh.² The Chronicler asserts that Manasseh's captivity was due to his idolatry, and that on his restoration he abolished in Judah all worship save that of Yahweh, but if this happened (and the Book of Kings has no trace of it) it was without result. Amon, son of Manasseh, continued to sacrifice to the images which his father had introduced.

2. THE EARLY YEARS OF JOSIAH (639-625) :

JEREMIAH AND ZEPHANIAH

Amon had not reigned for two years when *his servants conspired against him, and he was slain in his own house.*³ But the *people of the land* rose against the court, slew the conspirators, and secured the throne for Amon's son, Josiah, a child of eight. It is difficult to know what we ought to understand by these movements. Amon, who was slain, was an idolater; the popular party, who slew his slayers, put his son on the throne, and that son, unlike both his father and grandfather, bore a name compounded with the name of Yahweh. Was Amon then slain for personal reasons? Did the people, in their rising, have a zeal for Yahweh?

¹ So Winckler, *A.T. Untersuchungen*, p. 122, followed by Benzinger on 2 Chron. xxiii. 10-13, and Guthe, *Geschichte*, 227. But Winckler changed his opinion and placed Manasseh's visit to Babylon under Asarhaddon, *K.A.T.*³, pp. 274 f.

² See above, p. 11, n. 2.

³ 2 Kings xxi. 23.

Was the crisis purely political, but employed by some school or party of Yahweh who had been gathering strength through the later years of Manasseh, and were waiting for some such unsettlement of affairs as now occurred? The meagre records of the Bible give us no help, and for suggestions towards an answer we must turn to the wider politics of the time.

Ashurbanipal's campaigns of 647 and 645 were the last appearances of Assyria in Palestine. He had not attempted to reconquer Egypt,¹ and her king, Psametik I, began to push his arms northward. Progress must have been slow, for the siege of Ashdod, which Psametik probably began after 645, is said to have occupied him twenty-nine years. Still, he must have made his influence felt in Palestine, and in all probability there was once more, as in the days of Isaiah, an Egyptian party in Jerusalem. As the power of Assyria receded over the northern horizon, the fascination of her idolatries, which Manasseh had established in Judah, must have waned. The priests of Yahweh's house, jostled by their pagan rivals, would be inclined to make common cause with the prophets under a persecution which both had suffered. With the loosening of the Assyrian yoke the national spirit would revive, and it is easy to imagine prophets, priests and people working together in the movement which placed the child Josiah on the throne. At his tender age, he must have been in the care chiefly of the women of the royal house; and among these the influence of the prophets may have found adherents more readily than

¹ But in his conquests of Hauran, Northern Arabia and the eastern neighbours of Judah, he had evidently sought to imitate the policy of Asarhaddon in 675 f., and secure firm ground in Palestine and Arabia for a subsequent attack upon Egypt. That this never came betrays Assyria's consciousness of growing weakness.

among the counsellors of an adult prince. Not only did the new monarch carry the name of Yahweh in his own ; this was the case also with his mother's father.¹ In the revolt, therefore, which raised this unconscious child to the throne and in the circumstances which moulded his character, we may infer that there already existed the germs of the great work of reform which his manhood achieved.

For some time little change would be possible, but from the first facts were working for great issues. The Book of Kings, which places the destruction of the idols after the discovery of the law-book in the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign, records a previous cleaning and restoration of the house of Yahweh.² This points to the growing ascendancy of the prophetic party during the first fifteen years of Josiah's reign. Of the first ten years we know nothing, except that the prestige of Assyria was waning ; but this fact, along with the preaching of the prophets, who had neither a native tyrant nor the exigencies of a foreign alliance to silence them, may have weaned the people from the worship of the Assyrian idols. Unless these had been discredited, the repair of Yahweh's house could hardly have been attempted ; and that this progressed means that part of Josiah's destruction of the images took place before the discovery of the Book of the Law, which happened in consequence of the cleansing of the Temple.

But as under the good Hezekiah the social condition of the people, and the behaviour of the upper classes, continued to be bad, so it was in the early years of

¹ The name of Josiah's (יְחִיָּהוּ) mother was Jedidah (יְדִידָה), daughter of Adaiah (אֲדָיָה) of Boskath in the Shephelah of Judah.

² 2 Kings xxii, xxiii.

Josiah. There was a *remnant of Baal*¹ in the land. The shrines of *the host of heaven* might have been swept from the Temple, but they were still worshipped from the housetops.² Men swore by the Queen of Heaven, and by Moloch, the King. Some turned back from Yahweh; some, grown up in idolatry, had not yet sought Him. Idolatry may have been disestablished from the national sanctuary: its practices still lingered (how intelligibly to us!) in social and commercial life. Foreign fashions were affected by the court and nobility; trade, as always, was combined with the acknowledgment of foreign gods.³ Moreover, the rich were fraudulent and cruel. The ministers of justice, and the great in the land, ravened among the poor. Jerusalem was full of oppression. These were the same disorders as Amos and Hosea exposed in Northern Israel, and as Micah exposed in Jerusalem. But one new trait of evil was added. In the eighth century, with all their ignorance of Yahweh's true character, men had yet believed in Him, gloried in His energy, and expected Him to act—were it only in accordance with their low ideals. They had been alive and throbbing with religion. But now they *had thickened on their lees*. They had grown sceptical, dull, indifferent; they said in their hearts, *Yahweh will not do good, neither will He do evil!*

Now, just as in the eighth century there had risen, contemporaneous with Israel's social corruption, a cloud in the north, black and pregnant with destruction, so was it once more. But the cloud was not Assyria. From the hidden world beyond her, from the regions over Caucasus, vast, nameless hordes of men arose, and, sweeping past her unchecked, poured upon Palestine.

¹ Zeph. i. 4: the LXX reads *names of Baal*. See below, p. 55, n. 3.

² *Ibid.*, 5. ³ *Ibid.*, 8-12.

This was the great Scythian invasion recorded by Herodotus.¹ We have almost no other report than his few paragraphs, but we can realise the event from our knowledge of the Mongol and Tartar invasions which in later centuries pursued the same path southwards. Living in the saddle, and (it would seem) with no infantry nor chariots to delay them, these Centaurs swept on with a speed of invasion hitherto unknown. In 630 they had crossed the Caucasus, by 626 they were on the borders of Egypt. Psametik I succeeded in purchasing their retreat,² and they swept back as swiftly as they came. They must have followed the Assyrian war-paths of the eighth century, and, without foot-soldiers, had probably kept more closely to the plains. In Palestine their way would lie, like Assyria's, across Hauran, through the plain of Esdraelon, and down the Philistine coast, and in fact it is only on this line that there exists any trace of them.³ But they shook all Palestine into consternation. Though Judah among her hills escaped them, as she escaped the earlier campaigns of Assyria, they showed her the penal resources of her offended God. Once again the dark, sacred North was full of the possibilities of doom.

Behold, therefore, the two conditions, ethical and political, which, as we saw, called forth the sudden prophets of the eighth century, and made them sure of their message of judgement : on the one side Judah, her sins calling aloud for punishment ; on the other, the forces of punishment swiftly advancing. It was precisely at this juncture that prophecy again arose, and as Amos, Hosea, Micah and Isaiah appeared in

¹ I, 102 ff.

² Herod., i. 105.

³ The new name of Bethshan in the mouth of Esdraelon, *viz.*, Scythopolis, is said to be derived from them (but see *Hist. Geog. of the Holy Land*, pp. 363 f.) ; they conquered Askalon (Herod., i. 105).

the end of the eighth century, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Nahum and Jeremiah appeared in the end of the seventh. The coincidence is exact, and confirms the truth which we deduced from the experience of Amos, that the assurance of the prophet in Israel arose from the agreement of his conscience with his political observation. The justice of God demands His people's chastisement, but see—the forces of chastisement are already upon the horizon. Zephaniah uses the same phrase as Amos : *the Day of Yahweh*, he says, *is drawing near*.

We are now in touch with Zephaniah, the first of our prophets, but, before listening to him, it will be well to complete our survey of those years of the century in which he and his successors laboured.

3. THE REST OF THE CENTURY (625–586) : THE FALL OF NINEVEH ; NAHUM AND HABAKKUK

Although the Scythians had vanished from the horizon of Palestine and the Assyrians came over it no more, the fateful North still lowered dark and turbulent. Yet the keen eyes of the watchmen in Palestine perceived that, for a time at least, the storm must break where it had gathered. It is upon Nineveh, not upon Jerusalem, that the prophetic passion of Nahum and Habakkuk is concentrated ; the new day of the Lord is filled with the fate, not of Israel, but of Assyria.

For nearly two centuries Nineveh had been the capital and cynosure of Western Asia ; for more than one she had set the fashions, the art, and even, to some extent, the religion of the Semitic nations. Of late years, too, she had drawn to herself the world's trade. Great roads from Egypt, from Persia, and from the

Ægean converged upon her, till like Imperial Rome she was filled with a vast motley of peoples, and men went forth from her to the ends of the earth. Under Ashurbanipal travel and research had increased, and the city acquired renown as the centre of the world's wisdom. Thus her size and glory, with her details of rampart and tower, street, palace and temple, grew everywhere familiar. But the peoples gazed at her as those who had been bled to build her. Even the remote among them had seen face to face on their own fields, trampling, stripping, burning, the warriors who manned her walls. She had dashed their little ones against the rocks. Their kings had been dragged from them and hung in cages about her gates. Their gods had lined the temples of her gods. Year by year they sent her heavy tribute, and the bearers came back with fresh tales of her rapacious insolence. So she stood, bitterly clear to all men, in her glory and her cruelty! Their hate haunted her every pinnacle; and at last, when about 625 the news came that her frontier fortresses had fallen and the great city herself was being besieged, we can understand how her victims gloated on each possible stage of her fall, and saw her yield to one after another of the cruelties of battle, siege and storm, which for two hundred years she had inflicted on themselves. To such a vision the prophet Nahum gives voice, not on behalf of Israel alone, but of all the nations whom Nineveh had crushed.

It was obvious that the vengeance which Western Asia thus hailed upon Assyria must come from one or other of two groups of peoples, standing respectively to the north and to the south of her.

To the north, or north-east, between Mesopotamia and the Caspian, there were gathered a congeries of restless tribes known to the Assyrians as the Madai

or Matai, the Medes. They are mentioned first by Shalmaneser II in 840, and few of his successors do not record campaigns against them. The earliest notice of them in the Old Testament is in connection with the captives of Samaria, some of whom in 720 were settled among them.¹ These Medes were probably of Turanian stock, but by the end of the eighth century, if we are to judge from the names of some of their chiefs,² either the ruling tribe of the six or seven of which they were composed was Aryan, or else their eastern tribes had fallen under Aryan influence, spreading westward from Persia.³ So led, they became united and formidable to Assyria. Herodotus relates that their King Phraortes, or Fravartis, actually attempted the siege of Nineveh, probably on the death of Ashurbanipal in 625, but was slain.⁴ His son Kyaxares, Kastarit or Uvakhshatara, was forced by a Scythian invasion of his own country to withdraw his troops from Assyria; but having either bought off or assimilated the Scythian invaders, he returned in 608, with forces sufficient to overthrow the northern Assyrian fortresses and to invest Nineveh herself.

The other and southern group of peoples which threatened Assyria were Semitic. At their head were the Kasdim or Chaldeans.⁵ This name appears for

¹ 2 Kings xvii. 6: *and in the cities (LXX, mountains) of the Medes.* The Heb. is מַדַּי, Madai.

² Mentioned by Sargon.

³ Sayce, *Empires of the East*, 239; cf. McCurdy, § 823 f.; Winckler, *K.A.T.*³, pp. 77, 100, calls the Medes the eastern part of the Indo-Germanic race. See also *Isaiah xl-lxvi*, pp. 109 ff.

⁴ Herod., i. 103.

⁵ Heb. Kasdim, כַּשְׁדִּים; LXX, Χαλδαῖοι; Assyr. Kaldâa, Kaldu.

The Hebrew form with *s* is regarded by many authorities as the original, from the Assyrian root *kashadu*, to conquer, and the Assyrian form with *l* to have arisen by the common change of *sh* through *r* into *l*. The form

the first time in the Assyrian annals a little earlier than that of the Medes,¹ and from the middle of the ninth century onwards the people designated by it frequently engaged the Assyrian arms. They were, to begin with, nomad or semi-nomad tribes to the south of Babylon, in the neighbourhood of the Persian Gulf; but they proved their vigour by the repeated lordship of all Babylonia and by inveterate rebellion against the monarchs of Nineveh. Before the end of the seventh century we find their names used by the prophets for the Babylonians as a whole. Ashurbanipal, who was a patron of Babylonian culture, kept the country quiet during the last years of his reign, but his son Ashur-ital-ilani, upon his accession in 625, had to grant the viceroyalty to Nabopolassar the Chaldean with a considerable degree of independence. Ashur-ital-ilani was succeeded in a few years² by Sin-shar-ishkun, the Sarakos of the Greeks, who preserved at least a nominal sovereignty over Babylon,³ but Nabopolassar must already have cherished ambitions of succeeding the Assyrian in the empire of the world. He enjoyed sufficient freedom to organise his forces to that end.

These were the two powers which from north and south watched with impatience the decay of Assyria.

with *s* does not occur, however, in Assyrian, which also possesses the root *kaladu*, with the same meaning as *kashadu*. Tiele (*Geschichte*, I, 79) proved that Karduniash was the name of 'the land by the sea, that is the land of the Kaldi; the termination *iash* being according to Winckler the Kassite word for "land"' (*Untersuchungen zur Altorient. Gesch.*, 135 f.). See also Pinches' articles on Chaldea and the Chaldeans in the new edition of Smith's *Bible Dictionary*, that of C. H. W. Johns in *Enc. Bibl.*, and that of I. M. Price in Hastings' *Bible Dict.*

¹ About 880 B.C. in the annals of Ashurnatsirpal. See Chronological Table to Vol. I.

² No inscriptions of Ashur-ital-ilani have been found later than the first two years of his reign.

³ Billerbeck-Jeremias, 'Der Untergang Niniveh's,' in Delitzsch and Haupt's *Beiträge zur Assyriologie*, III, p. 113.

That they made no attempt upon her between 625 and 608 was probably due to several causes : their jealousy of each other, the Medes' trouble with the Scythians, Nabopolassar's genius for waiting till his forces were ready, and above all the still considerable vigour of the Assyrian himself. The Lion, though old,¹ was not broken. His power may have relaxed in the distant provinces of his empire, though, if Budde be right about the date of Habakkuk,² the peoples of Syria still groaned under the thought of it ; but his own land—his *lair*, as the prophets call it—was still terrible. It is true that, as Nahum perceives, the capital was no longer native and patriotic as it had been ; the trade fostered by Ashurbanipal had filled Nineveh with a vast mercenary population, ready to break and disperse at the first breach in her walls. Yet Assyria proper was covered with fortresses, and the tradition had long fastened upon the peoples that Nineveh was impregnable. Hence the tension of those years. The peoples of Western Asia looked eagerly for their revenge; but the two powers which alone could accomplish this stood waiting—afraid of each other perhaps, but more afraid of the object of their common ambition.

It is said that Kyaxares and Nabopolassar at last came to an agreement ;³ but more probably the crisis was hastened by the appearance of another claimant for the coveted spoil. In 608 Pharaoh Necho *went up against the king of Assyria towards the river Euphrates*.⁴

¹ Nahum ii.

² See below, Ch. IX.

³ Abydenus (apud Euseb., *Chron.*, I, 9) reports a marriage between Nebuchadrezzar, Nabopolassar's son, and the daughter of the Median king.

⁴ 2 Kings xxiii. 29. The history is here obscure. Necho, met at Megiddo by Josiah, and having slain him, appears to have spent a year or two in subjugating, and arranging for the government of, Syria (*ibid.*, vv. 33–35), and only reached the Euphrates in 605, when Nebuchadrezzar defeated him at Carchemish. See the writer's *Jeremiah*, Lecture V.

This Egyptian advance may have forced the hand of Kyaxares, who appears to have begun his investment of Nineveh a little after Necho defeated Josiah at Megiddo.¹ The siege is said to have lasted two years. Whether this included the delays necessary for the reduction of fortresses upon the roads of approach to the Assyrian capital we do not know; but Nineveh's own position, fortifications, and resources may account for the whole of the time. Colonel Billerbeck has suggested² that the Medes found it possible to invest the city only upon the northern and eastern sides. Down the west flows the Tigris, and across this the besieged may have been able to bring in supplies and reinforcements from the country beyond. Herodotus affirms that the Medes effected the capture of Nineveh by themselves,³ and for this some evidence has been found,⁴ so that another tradition that the Chaldeans

¹ The reverse view is taken by Wellhausen, who says (*Israel u. Jüd. Gesch.*, pp. 97 f.): 'Der Pharaoh scheint ausgezogen zu sein um sich seinen Teil an der Erbschaft Ninives vorwegzunehmen, während die Meder und Chaldäer die Stadt belagerten.'

² See above, p. 20, n. 3.

³ I, 106.

⁴ A stele of Nabonidus found at Hilleh and now in the museum at Constantinople relates that in his third year, 553, the king restored at Harran the temple of Sin, the moon-god, which the Medes had destroyed fifty-four years before, *i.e.*, 607. Whether the Medes did this before, during or after the siege of Nineveh is uncertain, but the approximate date of the siege, 608-606, is thus supported. The stele says that the Medes alone took Nineveh, but that they were called in by Marduk, the Babylonian god, to assist Nabopolassar and avenge the deportation of his image by Sennacherib to Nineveh. Messerschmidt (*Mittheilungen der Vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft*, I, 1896) argues that the Medes were summoned by the Babylonians while the latter were sore pressed by the Assyrians. Winckler had already (*Untersuch.*, pp. 124 ff., 1889) urged that the Babylonians would refrain from taking an active part in the overthrow of Nineveh in fear of incurring the guilt of sacrilege. Neither Messerschmidt's paper, nor Scheil's (who describes the stele in the *Recueil des Travaux*, XVIII, 1896), being accessible, I have written this note on information supplied by C. H. W. Johns, in the *Expository Times*, 1896, and by A. B. Davidson in App. I to *Nah., Hab. and Zeph.* Since

were also actively engaged,¹ has been doubted.² Nabopolassar may still have been in name an Assyrian viceroy; yet, as Colonel Billerbeck points out, he had it in his power to make Kyaxares' victory possible by holding the southern roads to Nineveh, detaching other viceroys of her provinces and so shutting her up to her own resources. But among other reasons to keep him away from the siege may have been the necessity of guarding against Egyptian designs on the moribund empire.³ Pharaoh Necho, as we know, was making for the Euphrates as early as 608. Now if Nabopolassar and Kyaxares had arranged to divide Assyria between them, then it is likely that they agreed also to share the work of making their inheritance sure, so that while Kyaxares overthrew Nineveh, Nabopolassar, or rather his son Nebuchadnezzar,⁴ waited for and overthrew Pharaoh by Carchemish on the Euphrates. Consequently Assyria was divided between the Medes and the Chaldeans; the latter as her heirs in the south took over her title to Syria and Palestine.

The two prophets with whom we have to deal at this

then C. J. Gadd has deciphered a tablet in the British Museum which summarises the chief events during eight years of the reign of Nabopolassar, and says that Nineveh fell in the fourteenth year of that monarch, which Gadd reckons as 612 (*Proceedings of the British Academy*, Vol. X, p. 474). But this is doubtful, both because the reckoning of the years of Nabopolassar's reign is uncertain, and because of the amount of evidence and inference that the year of the city's capture was 607-606. The tablet ascribes this to Nabopolassar, Kyaxares and the Scythians together, but being the work of a Babylonian scribe attributes the principal part to Nabopolassar.

¹ Berosus and Abydenus in Eusebius.

² See note before the last.

³ Gadd (*op. cit.*, p. 477) thinks that Egypt intended to support 'the tottering empire.' This also is doubtful.

⁴ This spelling (Jer. xlix. 28) is nearer the original than the alternative Hebrew Nebuchadnezzar. But the LXX, *Ναβουχοδονόσορ*, and the *Ναβουκοδρόσορος* of Abydenus and Megasthenes and *Ναβοκοδρόσορος* of Strabo, have preserved the more correct vocalisation; for the original is Nabu-kudurri-ušur = Nebo, defend the crown!

time are almost entirely engrossed with the fall of Assyria. Nahum exults in the destruction of Nineveh, Habakkuk sees in the Chaldeans the avengers of the peoples whom Assyria¹ had oppressed. For both these events are the close of an epoch : neither prophet looks beyond this. Nahum (not on behalf of Israel alone) gives expression to the epoch's long thirst for vengeance on the tyrant ; Habakkuk (if Budde's reading of him be right)² states the problem with which its victorious cruelties had filled the pious mind—states the problem and beholds the solution in the Chaldeans. And, surely the solution was so drastic and for the time complete, that we can understand how two prophets should exhaust their office in describing such things, and feel no motive to look either deep into the moral condition of Israel, or far into the future which God was preparing for His people. It might, of course, be said that the prophets' silence on the latter subjects was due to their positions immediately after the great Reform of 621, when the nation, having been roused to an honest striving after righteousness, did not require prophetic rebuke, and when the success of so godly a prince as Josiah satisfied spiritual ambitions. But this (even if the dates of the two prophets were certain) is hardly probable ; and the other explanation suffices. Who can doubt this who has realised the long epoch which then reached a crisis, or has been thrilled by the crash of the crisis itself ? The fall of Nineveh was deafening enough to drown for the moment, as it does in Nahum, even a Hebrew's clamant conscience of his country's sin. The problems, which the long success of Assyrian cruelty had started, were old and formidable enough to demand statement and answer before either

¹ But see below, Ch. IX.

² Below, Ch. IX.

the hopes or the responsibilities of the future could find voice. The past also requires its prophets. Feeling has to be satisfied, and experience balanced, before the heart will turn the leaf and read the page of the future.

Yet, through all this time of Assyria's decline, Israel had her own sins, fears, and convictions of judgement to come. The disappearance of the Scythians did not leave Zephaniah's predictions of doom without means of fulfilment; nor did the Reform of 621 remove the need of that doom. In the deepest hearts the assurance that Israel must be punished was only confirmed. The prophetess Huldah, the first to speak in the name of the Lord after the Book of the Law was discovered, emphasised not the reforms which it enjoined but the judgements which it predicted. Josiah's righteousness could at most ensure for himself a peaceful death: his people were incorrigible and doomed.¹ The reforms indeed proceeded, there was public and widespread penitence, idolatry in whole or part was abolished. But those were only shallow pedants who put their trust in the possession of a revealed Law and purged Temple,² and who boasted that therefore Israel was secure. Jeremiah repeated the gloomy forecasts of Zephaniah and Huldah; and even before the wickedness of Jehoiakim's reign proved the obduracy of Israel's heart, he affirmed *the imminence of the evil out of the north and the great destruction*.³ Of our three prophets in this period Zephaniah, though the earliest, had therefore the last word. While Nahum and

¹ 2 Kings xxii. 11-20. The genuineness of this passage is proved (as against Stade, *Gesch. des Volkes Israel*, I) by the promise which it gives to Josiah of a peaceful death. Had it been written after the battle of Megiddo, in which Josiah was slain, it could not have contained such a promise.

² Jer. vii. 4, viii. 8.

³ vi. 1.

Habakkuk were absorbed with the epoch that is closing, he had a vision of the future. Is this why his book has been ranged among our Twelve after those of his slightly later contemporaries ?

The precise course of events in Israel was this—and we must follow them, for among them we have to seek exact dates for Nahum and Habakkuk. In 621 the Book of the Law was discovered, and Josiah applied himself to the reforms which he had begun. For thirteen years he seems to have had peace to carry them through. The heathen altars were thrown down, with the high places in Judah and even some in Samaria. Images were abolished. The heathen priests were exterminated, with the wizards and soothsayers. The Levites, except the sons of Zadok, who alone were allowed to minister in the Temple, henceforth the only place of sacrifice, were debarred from priestly duties. A great passover was celebrated.¹ The king did justice and was the friend of the poor ;² it went well with him and the people.³ He extended his influence into Samaria ; it is probable that he ventured to carry out the injunctions of Deuteronomy with regard to the neighbouring heathen.⁴ Literature flourished : though critics have not agreed as to the works to be assigned to this reign, they own that a great many were produced in it. Wealth must have accumulated : the nation certainly entered the troubles of the next reign with an arrogant confidence that argues under Josiah the growth of prosperity. Then of a sudden came the fatal year of 608. Pharaoh Necho appeared in Pales-

¹ All these reforms in 2 Kings xxiii.

² Jer. xxii. 15 f.

³ *Ibid.*, ver. 16.

⁴ We have no record of this, but a prince who rashly flung himself in the way of Egypt would not hesitate to claim authority over Moab and Ammon.

tine¹ with an army destined for the Euphrates, and Josiah went up to meet him at Megiddo. His tactics are plain—it is the first strait on the land-road from Egypt to the Euphrates—but his motives are obscure. Assyria can hardly have been strong enough at this time to fling him as her vassal across the path of her ancient foe. He must have gone of himself. ‘His dream was probably to bring back the scattered remains of the northern kingdom to a pure worship, and to unite the whole people of Israel under the sceptre of the house of David; and he was not inclined to allow Egypt to cross his aspirations, and rob him of the inheritance which was falling to him from the dead hand of Assyria.’²

Josiah fell, and with him not only the liberty of his people, but a chief support of their faith. That the righteous king was cut down in the midst of his days and in defence of the Holy Land—what could this mean? Was it, then, vain to serve the Lord? Could He not defend His own? With some the disaster was a cause of sore complaint, and with others, perhaps, of open desertion from Yahweh.³

But the extraordinary thing is, how little effect Josiah’s death seems to have had upon the people’s self-confidence, or upon their adherence to Yahweh. They immediately placed Josiah’s second son on the

¹ 2 Kings xxiii. 29. The question whether Necho came by land from Egypt or brought his troops in his fleet to Akka is hardly answered by the fact that Josiah went to Megiddo to meet him. But Megiddo is not on the path from Akka to the Euphrates; it is the key of the land-road from Egypt to the Euphrates. Josiah could have no hope of stopping Pharaoh on the broad levels of Philistia; but at Megiddo there was a narrow pass, and the only chance of arresting an army as it moved in detachments.

² A. B. Davidson, *The Exile and the Restoration*, p. 8 (Bible Class Primers, ed. by Salmond; Edin., T. & T. Clark, 1897).

³ See the present writer’s *Jeremiah*, Lecture V.

throne ; but Necho, having got him by some means to his camp at Riblah between the Lebanons, sent him in fetters to Egypt, where he died, and established in his place Eliakim, his elder brother. On his accession Eliakim changed his name to Jehoiakim, a proof that Yahweh was still regarded as the sufficient patron of Israel ; and the same blind belief that, for the sake of His Temple and of His Law, Yahweh would keep His people in security, continued to persevere in spite of Megiddo. It was an immoral ease, and filled with injustice. Necho subjected the land to a fine. This was not heavy, but Jehoiakim, instead of paying it out of the royal treasures, exacted it from *the people of the land*,¹ and employed the peace which it purchased in erecting a costly palace for himself by the forced labour of his subjects.² He was covetous, unjust, and cruel. Like prince like people : social oppression prevailed, and there was a recrudescence of the idolatries of Manasseh's time,³ especially (it may be inferred) after Necho's defeat at Carchemish in 605. That all this should exist along with a fanatic trust in Yahweh need not surprise us who remember the similar state of the public mind in North Israel under Amos and Hosea. Jeremiah attacked it as they had done. Though Assyria was fallen, and Egypt promising protection, Jeremiah predicted destruction from the north on Egypt and Israel alike. When at last the Egyptian defeat at Carchemish stirred some vague fears in the people's hearts, Jeremiah's conviction broke out into clear flame. For three-and-twenty years he had brought God's word in vain to his countrymen. Now God Himself would act : Nebuchadrezzar was His servant to lead Israel to captivity.⁴

¹ 2 Kings xxiii. 33-35.

² Jer. xi.

³ Jer. xxii. 13-15.

⁴ xxv. i ff.

The same year, 605 or 604, Jeremiah wrote these things in a volume;¹ and a few months later, at a national fast, occasioned perhaps by fear of the Chaldeans, Baruch, his secretary, read them in the house of the Lord, in the ears of the people. The king was informed, the roll was brought him, and as it was read, he cut it up and burned it, three or four columns at a time. Jeremiah answered by calling down on Jehoiakim an ignominious death, and repeated the doom already uttered on the land. Another prophet, Urijah, had been executed for the same truth; but Jeremiah and Baruch escaped into hiding.

This was probably in 603, and for a short time Jehoiakim and the populace were restored to their false security by the delay of the Chaldeans to come south. Nebuchadrezzar was occupied in Babylon, securing his succession to his father. At last, either in 602 or more probably in 600, he marched into Syria, and Jehoiakim *became his servant for three years.*² In such a condition the Jewish state might have survived for another generation,³ but in 599 or 597 Jehoiakim, with the madness of the doomed, held back his tribute. The revolt was probably instigated by Egypt, which, however, did not dare to support it. As in Isaiah's time against Assyria, so now against Babylon, Egypt was a blusterer *who blustered and sat still*. She still *helped in vain and to no purpose.*⁴ Nor could Judah count on the help of other states in Palestine. They had joined Hezekiah against Sennacherib, but remembering,

¹ xxxvi.

² 2 Kings xxiv. 1. In the chronological table appended to Kautzsch's *Bibel* this verse and Jehoiakim's submission are assigned to 602. But this allows too little time for Nebuchadrezzar to confirm his throne in Babylon and march to Palestine, and it is not corroborated by the record in the Book of Jeremiah of events in Judah in 604-602.

³ Nebuchadrezzar did not die till 562.

⁴ See *Isaiah i-xxix*, p. 229.

perhaps, how Manasseh had failed to help them against Ashurbanipal, and that Josiah had carried things with a high hand towards them,¹ they obeyed Nebuchadrezzar and raided Judah till he himself should have time to arrive.² Amid these raids the senseless Jehoiakim seems to have perished,³ for when Nebuchadrezzar appeared before Jerusalem in 597, his son Jehoiachin, a youth of eighteen, had succeeded to the throne. The innocent reaped the harvest sown by the guilty. In the attempt (it would appear) to save his people from destruction,⁴ Jehoiachin capitulated. But Nebuchadrezzar was not content with the person of the king: he deported to Babylon the court, a large number of influential persons, *the mighty men of the land* or what must have been nearly all the fighting men, with the necessary military artificers and swordsmiths. Priests also went, Ezekiel among them, and probably representatives of other classes not mentioned by the annalist. These were the flower of the nation. Over what was left Nebuchadrezzar placed a son of Josiah on the throne who took the name of Şedekiah. Again with common sense, the state might have survived; but there was a short respite. The new court began intrigues with Egypt, and Şedekiah, with the Ammonites and Tyre, ventured a revolt in 589. Jeremiah and Ezekiel knew it was in vain. Nebuchadrezzar marched on Jerusalem, and though for a time he had to raise the siege in order to defeat a force sent by Pharaoh Hophra, the Chaldean armies closed in again upon the doomed city. Her defence was stubborn; but famine

¹ See above, p. 26, n. 4.

² 2 Kings xxiv. 2.

³ Jer. xxxvi. 30, but see 2 Kings xxiv. 6.

⁴ So Josephus (X, *Antiq.*, vii. 1). Jehoiachin was bewailed (Lam. iv. 20; Ezek. xvii. 22 ff.). He survived till the death of Nebuchadrezzar, whose successor, Evil-Merodach, in 561 took him from prison and gave him a place in his palace (2 Kings xxv. 27 ff.).

and pestilence sapped it, and numbers fell away to the enemy. About the eighteenth month, the besiegers took the northern suburb and stormed the middle gate. Şedekiah and the army broke their lines only to be captured at Jericho. In a few weeks more the city was taken and given over to fire. Şedekiah was blinded, and with a large number of his people carried to Babylon. It was the end, for although a small community of Jews was left at Mişpeh under a Jewish viceroy and with Jeremiah to guide them, they were soon broken up and fled to Egypt. Judah had perished. Her savage neighbours, who had gathered with glee to the day of Jerusalem's calamity, assisted the Chaldeans in capturing the fugitives, and Edomites came up from the south on the desolate land.

It has been necessary to follow so far the course of events, because of our prophets Zephaniah is placed by critics in each of the three sections of Josiah's reign, and by some even in Jehoiakim's; Nahum has been assigned to different points between the eve of the first and the eve of the second siege of Nineveh; and Habakkuk has been placed in almost every year from 621 to the reign of Jehoiachin; while Obadiah, whom we shall find reasons for partly dating in the Exile, describes the behaviour of Edom at the final siege of Jerusalem. The next of the Twelve, Haggai, may have been born before the Exile, but did not prophesy till 520. Zechariah appeared the same year, 'Malachi' not for half a century after. These three are prophets of the Persian period. With the approach of the Greeks Joel appears, then comes the prophecy which we find in the end of Zechariah's book, and last of all the Book of Jonah. To all these post-exilic prophets we shall provide later the necessary introductions.



ZEPHANIAH

Dies Iræ, Dies Illa!—ZEPH. i. 15.

CHAPTER II

THE BOOK OF ZEPHANIAH

THE Book of Zephaniah is one of the most difficult in the prophetic canon. The title is generally accepted ; the period from which chap. i dates is recognised by practically all to be the reign of Josiah. But after that doubts start, and we find present nearly every other problem of introduction.

To begin with, the text is damaged. In some passages we may be sure that we have not the true text ;¹ in others we cannot be sure that we have it,² and there are several glosses.³ The bulk of the second chapter was written in the *Ḳinah*, or elegiac measure, but as it now stands the rhythm is broken. It is difficult to say whether this is due to the dilapidation of the original text or to the insertion of glosses. The Greek version of Zephaniah possesses the same features as those of other difficult prophecies. Occasionally it enables us to correct the text ; but by the time it was made the text must have contained the corruptions which we encounter, and the translators were ignorant of the meaning of phrases which to us are plain.⁴

The difficulties of textual criticism as well as of translation are aggravated by the number of words,

¹ i. 3*b*, 5*b* ; ii. 2, 5, 6, 7, 8 last word, 14*b* ; iii. 18, 19*a*, 20.

² i. 14*b* ; ii. 1, 3 ; iii. 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 15, 17.

³ i. 3*b*, 5*b* ; ii. 2, 6 ; iii. 5 (?).

⁴ For details see translation below.

grammatical forms and phrases which either happen seldom in the Old Testament,¹ or nowhere else in it.² Of the rare words and phrases, a few (as will be seen from the appended notes) are found in earlier writings. Indeed, all that are found are from the authentic prophecies of Isaiah, with whose style and doctrine Zephaniah's own exhibit most affinity. The other rarities of vocabulary and grammar are shared only by *later* writers; and as a whole the language of Zephaniah exhibits symptoms which separate it by many years from the language of the prophets of the eighth century, and range it with that of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the Second Isaiah and later literature. It may be useful to the student to collect in a note the most striking of these symptoms of the comparative lateness of Zephaniah's dialect.³

¹ i. 3, מְשָׁלוֹת, only in Isa. iii. 6; 15, מְשׁוּזָה, only in Job xxx. 3, xxxviii. 27—cf. Psalms lxxiii. 18, lxxiv. 3; ii. 8, נְדָפִים, Isa. xliii. 28—cf. li. 7; 9, חֲרוֹל, Prov. xxiv. 31, Job xxx. 7; 15, עֲלִיזָה, Isa. xxii. 2, xxiii. 7, xxxii. 13—cf. xiii. 3, xxiv. 8; iii. 1, נָנִי לָהּ, see next note but one; 3, זָאבִי עָרֵב, Hab. i. 8; 11, עֲלִיזֵי גְאוֹתָךְ, Isa. xiii. 3; 18, נֹנִי, Lam. i. 4, נֹנוֹת.

² i. 11, הַמִּכְתֵּשׁ as the name of a part of Jerusalem, otherwise only Jer. xv. 19; נִשְׁלִי כֶסֶף, 12, קָפָא in pt. Qal, and otherwise only Exod. xv. 8, Zech. xiv. 6, Job x. 10; 14, מְהָרַךְ (adj.), but the pointing may be wrong—cf. Maher-shalal-hash-baz, Isa. viii. 1, 3; צָרַח in Qal, elsewhere only once in Hi. Isa. xlii. 13; 17, לָחוּם in sense of flesh, cf. Job xx. 23; 18, נִבְהִלָה if a noun (?); ii. 1, קָשָׁשׁ in Qal and Hithpo, elsewhere only in Polel; 9, מִמְשָׁק, מִכְרָה, 11, רָזָה, to make lean, otherwise only in Isa. xvii. 4, to be lean; 14, אֲרֻזָּה (?); iii. 1, מִרְאָה, pt. of מִרָה; יוֹנָה, pt. Qal, in Jer. xlv. 16, l. 16, it may be a noun; 4, אֲנָשִׁי בְנֵדוֹת, 6, נִצְדָד; 9, שָׁכַם אֶחָד, 10, עֲתָרִי בַת־פּוֹצִי (?); 15, פָּנָה in sense to *turn away*; 18, מִמֶּךָ חָיָה (?).

³ i. 8, etc., פָּקַד עַל, followed by person, but not by thing—cf. Jer. ix. 24, xxiii. 34, etc., Job xxxvi. 23, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 23, Ezek. i. 2; 13, מִשְׁחָה only in Hab. ii. 7, Isa. xlii., Jer. xxx. 16, 2 Kings xxi. 14; 17, הָצָר, Hi. of צָרַר, only in 1 Kings viii. 37, and Deut., 2 Chron., Jer., Neh.; ii. 3, עֲנָה; 8, נְדָפִים, Isa. xliii. 28, li. 7 (fem. pl.); 9, חֲרוֹל,

We come to the question of date, and take the first chapter. It was said above that critics agree as to the general period—between 639, when Josiah began to reign, and 600. But this period was divided into three different sections, and each has received support from criticism. The majority of critics place the chapter in the early years of Josiah, before the enforcement of Deuteronomy and the Reform in 621.¹ Others argue for the later years of Josiah, 621–608, on the ground that the chapter implies that the Reform has taken place, and shows knowledge of Deuteronomy;² while some prefer the reaction under Jehoiakim, 608 ff.,³ and assume that the phrase in the title, *in the days of Josiah*, is a late, erroneous inference from i. 4.

The evidence for the argument consists of the title and the condition of Judah reflected in the body of the chapter. The latter is a definite piece of oratory. Under the alarm of an immediate and general war, Zephaniah proclaims a vast destruction upon the earth. Judah must fall beneath it: the worshippers of Baal, of the host of heaven and of Milcom, the apostates from Yahweh, the princes and house of the king, the imitators of foreign fashions, and the forceful and fraudulent, shall be cut off in a great slaughter. Those who have grown sceptical and indifferent to Yahweh

Prov. xxiv. 31, Job xxx. 7; iii. 1, נִטְמָא, Ni. pt. = impure, Isa. lix. 3, Lam. iv. 14; יִוְנָה, a pt. in Jer. xlvi. 16, l. 16; 3, זֹאבֵי עָרֵב, Hab. i. 8—cf. Jer. v. 6, זֹאבֵי עֲרֵבוֹת, 9, בְּרוֹר, Isa. xlix. 2, בָּרֵר, Ezek. xx. 38, 1 Chron. vii. 40, ix. 22, xvi. 41, Neh. v. 18, Job xxxiii. 3, Eccles. iii. 18, ix. 1; 11, עֲלֵי נֶאֱחָ, Isa. xiii. 3; 18, נִהְיִי, Lam. i. 4 has נִהְיִיתָ.

¹ So Hitzig, Ewald, Pusey, Kuenen, W. R. Smith (*Encyc. Brit.*), Driver, Wellhausen, Kirkpatrick, Budde, von Orelli, Cornill, Schwally, Davidson, Rothstein (in Kautzsch's *Heil. Schrift des A.T.*), Marti (627 or 626), Beer, Kennedy, J. M. P. Smith, Sellin.

² So Delitzsch, Kleinert and Schulz (*Commentar über den Proph. Zeph.*, 1892, p. 7, quoted by König).

³ So König.

shall be unsettled by invasion and war. This shall be the Day of Yahweh, near and immediate, a day of battle and disaster on the whole land.

The conditions reflected are thus twofold—the idolatrous and sceptical state of the people, and an impending invasion. But these suit, more or less, each of the three sections of our period. For Jeremiah states that he had to attack idolatry in Judah for twenty-three years, 627 to 604;¹ he inveighs against the falseness and impurity of the people alike before the great Reform, and after it while Josiah was still alive, and still more fiercely under Jehoiakim. And, while before 621 the great Scythian invasion was sweeping upon Palestine from the north, after 621, and especially after 604, the Babylonians from the same quarter were threatening the land. But when looked at more closely, the chapter shows features which suit the second section of our period less than they do the other two. The worship of the host of heaven, probably introduced under Manasseh, was put down by Josiah in 621; it revived under Jehoiakim,² but during the latter years of Josiah it cannot possibly have been so public as Zephaniah describes.³ Other reasons which have been given for those years are inconclusive⁴—the

¹ Jer. xxv.

² Jer. vii. 18.

³ i. 3.

⁴ Kleinert in his Commentary in Lange's *Bibelwerk*, and Delitzsch in Herzog's *Real-Encyclopädie*², offer inconclusive arguments. These are drawn from the position of Zephaniah after Habakkuk, but, as we have seen, the order of the Twelve is not chronological; from the supposition that Zephaniah i. 7, *Silence before the Lord Yahweh*, quotes Habakkuk ii. 20, *Keep silence before Him, all the earth*, but the phrase common to both is too general to be decisive, and if borrowed may just as well have been Zephaniah's as Habakkuk's; from the phrase *remnant of Baal* (i. 4), as if this were appropriate only after the Reform of 621, but it was as appropriate after the beginnings of reform six years earlier; from the condemnation of *the sons of the king* (i. 8), whom Delitzsch takes as Josiah's sons, who before the Reform were too young to be condemned, while later their characters did develop badly and judgement fell upon all of

chapter, for instance, makes no indubitable reference to Deuteronomy or the Covenant of 621—and on the whole we may leave the end of Josiah's reign out of account. Turning to the third section, Jehoiakim's reign, we find one feature of the prophecy which suits it admirably. The temper described in ver. 12—*men who are settled on their lees, who say in their heart, Yahweh, doeth neither good nor evil*—is the kind of temper likely to have been produced among the less earnest adherents of *Yahweh* by the failure of the great Reform in 621 to effect either the purity or the prosperity of the nation. But this is more than counter-balanced by the significant exception of the king from the condemnation which ver. 8 passes on the *princes and the sons of the king*. Such an exception could not have been made when Jehoiakim was king; it points to the reign of the good Josiah. And with this agrees the title of the chapter—in the days of Josiah.¹ We are driven back to the years of Josiah before 621. In these we find no discrepancy either with the chapter itself, or with its title. The southward march of the Scythians,² between 630 and 625, accounts for Zephaniah's alarm of a general war, including the invasion of Judah; the idolatrous practices which he

them, but *sons of the king*, even if that be the correct reading (LXX, *house of the king*), does not necessarily mean the reigning monarch's children; and from the assertion that Deuteronomy is quoted in the first chapter of Zephaniah, and 'so quoted as to show that the prophet needs only to put the people in mind of it as something supposed to be known,' but the verses cited in support of this (13, 15, 17: cf. Deut. xxviii. 30 and 29) are too general in character to prove the assertion. See translation below.

¹ König has to deny the authenticity of this to make his case for the reign of Jehoiakim. But nearly all take the phrase as genuine.

² See above, p. 16. For inconclusive reasons Schwally, *Z.A.T.W.*, 1890, pp. 215-217, prefers the Egyptians under Psametik. See in answer Davidson, p. 98.

describes may well have been those surviving from the days of Manasseh,¹ and not yet reached by the drastic measures of 621; the temper of scepticism and hopelessness condemned by ver. 12 was possible among those adherents of Yahweh who had hoped greater things from the overthrow of Amon than the slow reforms of the first fifteen years of Josiah's reign. Nor is a date before 621 made difficult by the genealogy of Zephaniah in the title. If, as is probable,² the Hezekiah given as his great-great-grandfather be Hezekiah the king, and if he died about 695, and Manasseh, his successor, who was then twelve, was his eldest son, then by 630 Zephaniah cannot have been much more than twenty years of age, and not more than twenty-five by the time the Scythian invasion had passed away.³ It is therefore not impossible that he prophesied before 625; and besides, the data of the genealogy in the title are too precarious to make them valid, as against an inference from the contents of the chapter itself.

The date, therefore, of the first chapter of Zephaniah may be given as about 625 B.C., and probably rather before than after that year, as the tide of Scythian invasion has apparently not yet ebbed.

The other two chapters have within recent years been denied to Zephaniah. Kuenen doubted ch. iii. 9-20. Stade makes all ch. iii post-exilic, and suspects

¹ Not much stress can be laid upon the phrase *I will cut off the remnant of Baal*, ver. 4, for, if the reading be correct, it may only mean the destruction of Baal-worship, and not the uprooting of what has been left over.

² See below, pp. 45 f.

³ If 695 be the date of the accession of Manasseh, being then twelve, Amariah, Zephaniah's great-grandfather, cannot have been more than ten, born in 705. His son Gedaliah was probably not born before 689, his son Kushi probably not before 672, and his son Zephaniah probably not before 650.

ii. 1-3, 11. A thorough examination has led Schwally¹ to assign to exilic or post-exilic times the whole of the little sections comprising them, with the possible exception of ch. iii. 1-7, which 'may be' Zephaniah's. His essay has been subjected to a searching and generally hostile criticism by leading scholars;² and he has admitted the inconclusiveness of some of his reasons.³

Ch. ii. 1-3 is assigned by Schwally to a date later than Zephaniah's, principally because of the term *meekness* (ver. 3), which is a favourite with post-exilic writers. He has been sufficiently answered;⁴ and the connection of vv. 1-3 with ch. i has been proved.⁵ Ch. ii. 4-15 is the passage in elegiac measure but broken, an argument that insertions have been made in it. The subject is a series of foreign nations—Philistia (5-7), Moab and Ammon (8-10), Egypt (12), and Assyria (13-15). The passage has given rise to doubts; we must admit the difficulty of a conclusion as to its authenticity. On the one hand, the destruction just predicted is so universal that, as A. B. Davidson says, we should expect Zephaniah to mention other nations than Judah.⁶ The concluding oracle on Nineveh must have been published before 608, and Schwally admits

¹ *Z.A.T.W.*, 1890, Heft 1.

² Bacher, *Z.A.T.W.*, 1891, 186; Cornill, *Einleitung*, 1891; Budde, *Theol. Stud. u. Krit.*, 1893, 393 ff.; Davidson, *Nah., Hab. and Zeph.*, 100 ff.

³ *Z.A.T.W.*, 1891, Heft 2.

⁴ By especially Bacher, Cornill and Budde as above.

⁵ See Budde and Davidson.

⁶ The ideal of ch. i-ii. 3, of the final security of a poor and lowly remnant of Israel, 'necessarily implies that they shall no longer be threatened by hostility from without, and this condition is satisfied by the prophet's view of the impending judgement on the ancient enemies of his nation,' *i.e.*, those mentioned in ii. 4-15 (Robertson Smith, *Encycl. Brit. art.* 'Zephaniah').

that it may be Zephaniah's. But if this be so, then we may infer that the first of the oracles on Philistia is also Zephaniah's, for both it and the oracle on Assyria are in the elegiac measure, which makes it probable that the whole passage, however intruded upon, was originally a unity. Nor is there anything in the oracle on Philistia incompatible with Zephaniah's date. Philistia lay on the path of the Scythian invasion; the phrase in ver. 7, *shall turn their captivity*, is not necessarily exilic. As Cornill, too, points out, the expression in ver. 13, *He will stretch out His hand to the north*, implies that the prophecy has already looked in other directions. There remains the passage between the oracles on Philistia and Assyria. This is not in the elegiac measure. Its subject is Moab and Ammon, who were not on the line of the Scythian invasion, and Wellhausen further objects to it, because the attitude to Israel of the two peoples whom it describes is attributed to them only just before the Exile and surprises us in Josiah's reign. Dr. Davidson meets this objection by pointing out that, just as in Deuteronomy, so here, Moab and Ammon are denounced, while Edom, which in Deuteronomy is spoken of with kindness, is here not denounced. A stronger objection to the passage is that ver. 11 predicts the conversion of the nations, while ver. 12 makes them the prey of Yahweh's sword, and in this ver. 12 follows on naturally to ver. 7. On this ground as well as on the absence of the elegiac measure the oracle on Moab and Ammon is to be suspected.

On the whole, then, the probable conclusion is that ch. ii. 4-15 was originally an authentic oracle of Zephaniah's in the elegiac metre, uttered at the same date as chs. i-ii. 3, the period of the Scythian in-

vation, though from a different standpoint; and that it has suffered dilapidation (especially vv. 6 and 14), and probably one intrusion, vv. 8-10.¹

There remains the third chapter. The authenticity has been denied by Schwally, who transfers the whole till after the Exile. But the chapter is not a unity.² In the first place, it falls into two sections, vv. 1-13 and 14-20. There is no reason to take away the bulk of the first section from Zephaniah. As Schwally admits, the argument here is parallel to that of chs. i-ii. 3. It could hardly have been applied to Jerusalem during or after the Exile, but suits her conditions before her fall. Schwally's linguistic objections to a pre-exilic date have been answered by Budde.³ He holds ver. 6 to be out of place and puts it after ver. 8, and this may be. But as it stands it appeals to the impenitent Jews of ver. 5 with the picture of the judgement God has completed upon the nations, and contrasts with ver. 7, in which God says that He trusts Israel will repent.

¹ The earlier drastic criticism of Schwally (who denies to Zephaniah practically all ch. ii.), Stade and Budde has not been fully accepted by more recent critics. Cornill regards the chapter as 'worked over to only an insignificant extent.' As interpolations Marti takes vv. 2b, 3, part of 7, 8-11, 15; J. M. P. Smith, 3b, 8-11, 15; Sellin, 8-11. Rothstein is more reserved in his judgement.

² See, however, Davidson for some linguistic reasons for taking the two sections as one. W. R. Smith also assumed (though not without pointing out the possibility of the addition of other pieces to the genuine prophecies of Zephaniah) that 'a single leading motive runs through the whole' book, and 'the first two chapters would be incomplete without the third, which moreover is certainly pre-exilic (vv. 1-4) and presents specific points of contact with what precedes, as well as a general agreement in style and idea.'

³ Schwally (234) thinks that the epithet צדיק (ver. 5) was first applied to Yahweh by the Second Isaiah (xliv. 21, lxiv. 2, xlii. 21), and became frequent from his time. In disproof Budde (398) quotes Exod. ix. 27 Jer. xii. 1, Lam. i. 18. Schwally points to נצור as borrowed from Aramaic.

Vv. 9 and 10 are, we shall see, an intrusion, as Budde maintains and Davidson admits to be possible.¹

We reach more certainty when we come to the second section of the chapter, vv. 14-20. Since Kuenen it has been recognised by practically all critics that we have here a prophecy from the end of the Exile or after the Return. The temper has changed. Instead of the austere and sombre outlook of ch. i-ii. 3 and ch. iii. 1-13, in which the sinful Israel is to be saved indeed, but only as by fire, we have a triumphant prophecy of her recovery from all affliction (nothing is said of her sin) and of her glory among the nations. To put it otherwise, while the genuine prophecies of Zephaniah almost grudgingly allow a door of escape to a few righteous and humble Israelites from a judgement which is to fall alike on Israel and the Gentiles, ch. iii. 14-20 predicts Israel's deliverance from her Gentile oppressors, her return from captivity and the establishment of her renown. The language, too, has many resemblances to that of Second Isaiah.² Thus we have here, added to the severe prophecies of Zephaniah, such a more hopeful, peaceful epilogue as we saw added, during the Exile or immediately after it, to the despairing prophecies of Amos.

¹ Budde, p. 395; Davidson, p. 103. Schwally (230 ff.) seeks to prove the unity of 9 and 10 with the context, but has mistaken the meaning of ver. 8 (231). That surely does not mean that the nations are gathered to punish the godlessness of the Jews, but to be punished. Cornill points out that 10 is strange in a prophet, writing in 630; J. M. P. Smith: 'the only original matter is in 1-5,' but '6, 7 may be old material'; Sellin takes 1-13 as genuine; Driver (*Enc. Bibl.* 5406), 'against iii. 1-8, 11-13 no reasonable objection can be urged.'

² See Davidson, p. 103; Cornill, etc.; Driver (*Enc. Bibl.*, 5406 f.) says: 'The picture is an ideal one . . . and the question remains whether it is more than a lyrical development of the thought of vv. 11-13 such as Zephaniah, realising vividly in spirit the blissful future, might have constructed himself. . . . It is true that 18-20 is more open to suspicion than 14-17.'

CHAPTER III

THE PROPHET AND THE REFORMERS

ZEPHANIAH I-II. 3

TOWARDS the year 625, when King Josiah had passed out of his minority,¹ and was making his first efforts at religious reform, prophecy, long slumbering, awoke again in Israel.

Like the king, its first heralds were men in their youth. In 627 Jeremiah calls himself but a boy, and Zephaniah can hardly have been out of his teens.² For the sudden outbreak of these young lives there must have gathered a large reservoir of patience and hope in the generation behind them. So Scripture testifies. To Jeremiah it was said: *Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I consecrated thee.*³ In an age when names were bestowed only because of their significance,⁴ both prophets bore that of Yahweh in their own. So did Jeremiah's father, who was of the priests of Anathoth. Zephaniah's 'forbears' are given for four generations, and with one exception they are called after Yahweh: *The Word of Yahweh which came to Şephanyah, son of Kushi, son of Gedhalyah, son of Amaryah, son of Hizkiyah,*

¹ Josiah, born c. 648, succeeded c. 639, was about eighteen in 630, and then appears to have begun his reforms.

² See above, p. 40, n. 1.

³ Jer. i. 5.

⁴ See G. B. Gray, *Hebrew Proper Names*.

in the days of Joshiyahu,¹ Amon's son, king of Judah. Zephaniah's great-great-grandfather Hezekiah was in all probability the king.² His father's name Kushi, or *Ethiop*, is curious. If we are right, that Zephaniah was a young man towards 625, then Kushi must have been born towards 663, about the time of the conflicts between Assyria and Egypt, and it is possible that, as Manasseh and the predominant party in Judah so closely hung upon and imitated Assyria, the adherents of Yahweh put their hope in Egypt, whereof, it may be, this name Kushi is a token.³ The name Zephaniah itself, meaning *Yahweh hath hidden*, suggests the 'prophet's birth in the killing-time' of Manasseh. There was at least one contemporary of the same name—a priest executed by Nebuchadrezzar.⁴

Of the adherents of Yahweh, then, and possibly of royal descent, Zephaniah lived in Jerusalem. We descry him against her, almost as clearly as we descry Isaiah. In the glare and smoke of the conflagration which his vision sweeps across the world, only her features stand out definite and particular: the flat roofs with men and women bowing in the twilight to

¹ Josiah.

² It is not usual in the O.T. to carry a man's genealogy beyond his grandfather, except for some special purpose, or in order to include some ancestor of note. Also the name Hezekiah is rare apart from the king. The number of names compounded with Jah or Yahweh is another proof that the line is a royal one. The omission of the phrase *king of Judah* after Hezekiah's name proves nothing.

³ It was not till 652 that a league was made between the Palestine princes and Psametîk I against Assyria. This would have been a natural year for a child to be named Kushi. But that would set the birth of Zephaniah as late as 632, and his prophecy towards the end of Josiah's reign, which we have seen to be improbable on other grounds.

⁴ Jer. xxi. 1, xxix. 25, 29, xxxvii. 3, lii. 24 ff.; 2 Kings xxv. 18. The analogous Phœnician name *שפנבעל*, Şaphan-ba'al = 'Baal protects or hides,' is found in No. 207 of the Phœnician inscriptions in the *Corpus Inscr. Semiticarum*.

the host of heaven, the crowds of priests, the nobles and their foreign fashions ; the *Fishgate*, the New or *Second Town*, where the rich lived, the *Heights* to which building had at last spread, and between them the hollow *Mortar*, with its markets, Phœnician merchants and money-dealers. In the first verses of Zephaniah we see almost as much of Jerusalem as in the whole book either of Isaiah or Jeremiah.

For so young a man the vision of Zephaniah may seem strangely dark and final. Yet not otherwise was Isaiah's inaugural vision, and as a rule it is the young and not the old whose indignation is ardent and unsparing. Zephaniah carries this temper to the extreme. There is no great hope in his book, hardly any tenderness and never a glimpse of beauty. A townsman, Zephaniah has no eye for nature ; not only is no fair prospect described by him, he has not even a single metaphor drawn from nature's loveliness or peace. He is pitilessly true to his great keynotes : *I will sweep, sweep from the face of the ground ; He will burn, burn up everything.* No hotter book lies in the Old Testament. Neither dew nor grass nor tree nor any blossom lives in it, but everywhere is fire, smoke, and darkness, drifting chaff, ruins, nettles, **saltpits**, with owls and ravens looking from the windows of desolate palaces. Nor does Zephaniah foretell the restoration of nature in the end of the days. There is no prospect of a redeemed and fruitful land, but only of a group of battered and hardly saved characters : a few meek and righteous are hidden from the fire and creep forth when it is over. Israel is left *a poor and humble folk*. No prophet is more true to the doctrine of the remnant, or more resolutely refuses to modify it. Perhaps he died young.

The full truth, however, is that Zephaniah, though

he found his material in the events of his own day, tears himself loose from history altogether. To the earlier prophets the Day of the Lord, the crisis of the world, is a definite point in history: full of terrible, divine events, yet 'natural' ones—battle, siege, famine, massacre, and captivity. After it history is still to flow, common days come back and Israel pursue their way as a nation. But to Zephaniah the Day of the Lord assumes what we call the 'supernatural.' The grim colours are still woven of war and siege, but mixed with vague and solemn terrors from another sphere, by which history appears to be swallowed up, and it is only with an effort that the prophet thinks of a rally of Israel beyond. In short, with Zephaniah the Day of the Lord tends to become the Last Day. His book is the first tinging of prophecy with apocalypse: that is the moment which it supplies in the history of Israel's religion. Therefore with a true instinct the Christian singer of the Last Day took from Zephaniah his keynote. The 'Dies Iræ, Dies Illa' of Thomas of Celano is the Vulgate translation of Zephaniah's *A day of wrath is that day*.¹

Nevertheless, though the first of apocalyptic writers, Zephaniah does not allow himself the license of apocalypse. As he refuses to imagine glory for the righteous, so he does not dwell on the terrors of the wicked. He is sober and restrained, a matter-of-fact man, yet with power of imagination, who, amidst the vague horrors he summons, delights in giving a sharp realistic impression. The Day of the Lord, he says, what is it? *A strong man—there!—crying bitterly*.²

It is to the fierce ardour, and to the elemental interests

¹ Ch. i. 15. With the above paragraph cf. Robertson Smith, *Encycl. Brit.*, art. 'Zephaniah.'

² Ch. i. 14b.

of the book, that we owe the absence of two features of prophecy which are constant in the prophets of the eighth century. Firstly, Zephaniah betrays no interest in the reforms which (if we are right about the date) the young king, his contemporary, had started.¹ There was a party of reform, with a programme drawn from the main principles of prophecy and designed to put these into practice. And Zephaniah was a prophet—and ignored them. This forms the dramatic interest of his book. Here was a man of the same faith which the king, priests, and statesmen were striving to realise in public life, in the assured hope—as is plain from the temper of Deuteronomy—that the nation as a whole would be reformed and become a great nation, righteous and victorious. All this he ignored, and gave his own vision of the future: Israel a brand plucked from the burning; a few meek and righteous saved from the conflagration of a whole world. Why? Because for Zephaniah the elements were loose, and when the elements were loose what was the use of talking about reforms? The Scythians were sweeping upon Palestine, with enough of God's wrath in them to destroy a people still so full of idolatry as Israel was; and if not the Scythians, then some other power in that dark North which had ever been full of doom. Let Josiah try to reform Israel, but it was neither Josiah's nor Israel's day that was falling. It was the Day of the Lord, and when He came this was neither to reform nor to build up Israel, but to make visitation and to

¹ This forms one difficulty about the conclusion we reached as to the date. We saw that one reason against putting the Book of Zephaniah after the great Reforms of 621 was that it betrayed no sign of their effects. But it might be answered that, if Zephaniah prophesied before 621, his book should betray some sign of the approach of reform. Still the explanation given above is satisfactory.

punish in His wrath the unbelief and wickedness with which the nation was still rife.

An analogy to this dramatic opposition between prophet and reformer may be found in last century. At its crisis, in 1848, were many righteous men rich in hope and energy. The political institutions of Europe were being rebuilt. In our own land there were measures for the relief of toiling children and women, the organisation of labour and a wider distribution of wealth. But Carlyle held apart, and, though a personal friend of some of the reformers, counted their work hopeless: society was too corrupt, the rudest forces were loose, 'Niagara' was near. Carlyle was proved wrong and the reformers right, but in the analogous situation of Israel the reformers were wrong and the prophet right. Josiah's hope and daring were overthrown at Megiddo, and, though the Scythians passed away, Zephaniah's conviction of the sin and doom of Israel was fulfilled, not forty years later, in the fall of Jerusalem and the great Exile.

Again, to the same elemental interests is due the absence from Zephaniah of the social and individual studies which form the charm of other prophets. With one exception, there is no analysis of character, no portrait, no satire. But the exception is worth dwelling upon: it describes the temper abhorred by both prophet and reformer—that of the indifferent and stagnant man. Here we have a memorable picture of character, not without warnings for our own time.

Zephaniah heard God say: *And it shall be at that time that I will search out Jerusalem with lights, and I will make visitation upon the men who are become stagnant upon their lees, who say in their hearts, Yahweh doeth no good and doeth no evil.*¹ The metaphor is clear. New

¹ Ch. i. 12.

wine was left upon its lees only long enough to fix its colour and body.¹ If not then drawn off it grew thick and syrupy—sweeter, indeed, than the strained wine, and to the taste of some more pleasant, but feeble and ready to decay. ‘To settle upon one’s lees’ became a proverb for sloth, indifference, and the muddy mind. *Moab has been at ease from his youth and has settled upon his lees, and has not been emptied from vessel to vessel; therefore his taste stands in him and his scent is not changed.*² The characters stigmatised by Zephaniah are also obvious. They were a precipitate from the ferment of fifteen years back. Through the cruel days of Manasseh and Amon hope had been stirred and strained, emptied from vessel to vessel, and so sprang sparkling and keen into the new days of Josiah. But no miracle came, only ten years of waiting for the king’s majority and five more of small, tentative reforms. Nothing divine happened. There were but the ambiguous successes of a small party who had secured the king for their principles. The court was still full of foreign fashions, and idolatry rank upon the house-tops. Of course, disappointment and listlessness ensued. The new security became a temptation; persecution ceased, and religious men lived again at ease. So numbers of eager souls, who had been in the front of the movement, fell into a selfish and idle obscurity. The prophet hears God say, *I must search Jerusalem with lights* in order to find them. They had ‘fallen from the van and the freemen’; they had ‘sunk to the rear and the slaves,’ where they wallowed in the excuse that *Yahweh Himself would do nothing—neither good, therefore it is useless to attempt reform like Josiah and his party, nor evil, therefore Zephaniah’s*

¹ So *wine upon the lees* is a generous wine according to Isa. xxv. 6.

² Jer. xlviii. 11.

prophecy of destruction is also vain. The same temper was encountered by Mazzini in the second stage of his career. Many, who with him had dreamt of a free Italy, fell away when the first revolt failed—fell away not merely into weariness and fear, but, as he emphasises, into the very two tempers described by Zephaniah, scepticism and self-indulgence.

All this starts questions for ourselves. Here is the public temper, which at all periods provokes alike the despair of the reformer and the indignation of the prophet : the criminal apathy of well-to-do people sunk in ease and religious indifference. We have to-day the same mass of obscure persons, who oppose their inertia to every movement of reform, and are the drag upon vital and progressive religion. The great causes of God and Humanity are not defeated by the hot assaults of the Devil, but by the slow, crushing, glacier-like mass of thousands and thousands of indifferent nobodies. God's causes are never destroyed by being blown up, but by being sat upon. It is not the violent and anarchical whom we have to fear in the war for human progress, so much as the slow, the staid, the respectable. And the danger of these does not lie in their stupidity. Notwithstanding their religious profession, it lies in their scepticism. Respectability may be the precipitate of unbelief. Nay, it is that, however religious its mask, wherever it is mere comfort, decorousness and conventionality ; where, though it would abhor articulately confessing that God does nothing, it virtually means so—says so (as Zephaniah puts it) *in its heart*. by refusing to share manifest opportunities of serving Him, and covers its sloth and fear by hinting that God is not with the great crusades for freedom and purity to which it is summoned. What makes mere respectability so dangerous is that like the unshaken, un-

strained wine to which the prophet compares its obscure and muddy comfort, it tends to decay. A sermon could be preached on the putrescence of respectability—how the ignoble comfort of many respectable classes and their indifference to holy causes lead to sensuality, and poison the Home and the Family, on which they pride themselves. A large amount of the licentiousness of the present day is not that of outlaw and disordered lives, but is bred from the ease and indifference of many of our middle-class families.

It is perhaps the chief part of the sin of the obscure units, which form these masses of indifference, that they think they escape notice and cover their individual responsibility. At all times many have sought obscurity, not because they are humble, but because they are slothful, cowardly or indifferent. Obviously this is the temper which is met by the words, *I will search out Jerusalem with lights*. None of us shall escape because we have said, 'I will go with the crowd,' or 'I am a common man and have no right to thrust myself forward.' We shall be followed and judged, each of us for his and her personal attitude to the movements of our time. These things are not too high for us: they are *our* duty; and we cannot escape by slinking into the shadow.

For all this wickedness and indifference Zephaniah sees prepared the Day of the Lord—near, hastening and terrible. It sweeps at first in vague desolation, but then takes the outlines of a solemn slaughter-feast for which Yahweh has consecrated the guests, the unnamed armies from the north. Judah shall be invaded, and they that are at ease, who say *Yahweh does nothing*, shall be unsettled and routed. One vivid trait comes in like a screech upon the hearts of a people unaccustomed for years to war. *Hark, the Day*

of Yahweh ! cries the prophet. *A strong man—there !*—*crying bitterly.* From this flash upon the concrete, he returns to a vague terror, in which earthly armies merge in heavenly ; battle, siege, storm, and darkness are mingled, and destruction is spread upon the whole earth. The shades of Apocalypse are upon us.

Having already given the title, we now take the text of this significant chapter. There is a distinctive rhythm throughout it, which becomes even more distinctive by the removal of what are probably interpolations ; but whether the rhythm is one of rhetorical prose or of verse is uncertain. Marti, indeed, offers a series of quatrains in lines of alternately three and two beats, but only by eliminating many words that cannot be proved to be interpolations. With fewer eliminations J. M. P. Smith renders vv. 2-6 as a strophe of eight long, parallel but metrically irregular lines and 7-18 as eleven short strophes of two lines each. The arrangement adopted below is based only on the parallelism, regards only the more probable as interpolations, and leaves the question as between prose and irregular verse in suspense. The introduction of the formula, *The Rede of Yahweh*, may be late.

- i. 2. *I will sweep, sweep away all
From the face of the ground !
—The Rede of Yahweh—*
3. *Sweep away man and beast,
Sweep off the birds of the heavens
With the fish of the sea.¹
And I will ruin ² the wicked
And cut off the lawless ²*

¹ This line is doubtful, Marti omits it.

² The text reads *the ruins* (מְשָׁלוֹת), unless we prefer with Wellhausen מְקַשְׁלִים, *the stumbling-blocks*, i.e. *idols*) *with the wicked, and I will cut*

From the face of the ground

—*The Rede of Yahweh.*

4. *I will stretch out My Hand upon Judah
And on all Jerusalem's dwellers,
And I will cut off from this Place ¹
The name ² of the Baal ³
And the names ⁴ of the priestlings, ⁵*
5. *And them who bow down on the roofs
To the host of heaven,
Them who are bowing to Yahweh ⁶
But swearing by Milcom. ⁷*
6. *And them who draw back from Yahweh,
Who seek Him not nor consult Him.*

off man (LXX, *the lawless*) *from off the face of the ground.* Some think the clause partly too redundant, partly too specific, to be original. But suppose we read *וְהִכְשַׁלְתִּי* (cf. Mal. ii. 8, Lam. i. 14 and *passim*: this is more probable than Schwally's *כְּשַׁלְתִּי*, *op. cit.*, p. 169), and for *אדם* the reading which probably the LXX had before them, *אדם רשע* (Job xx. 29, xxvii. 13, Prov. xi. 7: cf. *אדם בלעל*, Prov. vi. 12) or *אדם עָלָל* (cf. iii. 5), we get the rendering adopted in the translation above. Some think the whole passage an intrusion, yet it is surely probable that the earnest moral spirit of Zephaniah would aim at the wicked from the very outset of his prophecy.

¹ That is the Temple.

² So LXX, held by some to be the original reading (Schwally, etc.). In that case the phrase might have some allusion to the promise in Deut., *the Place where I shall set My name.* This is more natural than a reference to Hosea ii. 19, quoted by some. For *name* Heb. reads *remnant*.

³ Some Greek codd. take Baal as fem., others as plur.

⁴ So LXX. Heb. *name*.

⁵ Heb. adds *with the priests*, LXX, *and the names of the priests*, a doubtful addition.

⁶ Heb. reads *and them who bow themselves, who swear, by Yahweh.* So LXX B. with *and before who swear.* But LXX A. omits *and*, LXX Q. omits *them who bow themselves.* Wellhausen keeps the clause with the exception of *who swear*, and reads as above. Others *to the moon.*

⁷ Or Molech = king. LXX, *by their king.* Other Greek versions: Moloch and Melchom. Vulg. Melchom. Heb. *Malkam.*

- i 7. *Hush before Yahweh the Lord* ¹
For nigh is Yahweh's Day,
For Yahweh hath fixed a ² *sacrifice,*
He hath hallowed His called to it.
8. [*And it shall be in the day of Yahweh's sacrifice*]
I will visit upon the princes,
And on the house ³ *of the king,*
And upon all who clothe them
In foreign apparel,
9. *And visit on all who leap*
Over the threshold ⁴ *that day,*
Who fill the house of their lord
With force and with fraud.
10. *On that day there shall be*
—The Rede of Yahweh—
Hark! a shriek from the Fishgate, ⁵
And wailing out of the Mishneh,
And havoc great on the Heights.
- II. *Howl, ye that dwell in the Makhtesh!* ⁶
For undone are all the traffickers! ⁷

¹ See note 6 on p. 55.

² LXX, *His*.

³ So LXX. Heb. *sons*.

⁴ Is this some superstitious rite as in the case of Dagon, 1 Sam. v. 5? Or is it a phrase for breaking into a house, and so parallel to the second clause of the verse? Most interpreters prefer the latter. The idolatrous rites have been left behind. Schwally suggests the original order may have been: *princes and sons of the king, who fill their lord's house full of violence and deceit: and I will visit upon every one that leapeth over the threshold on that day, and upon all that wear foreign raiment*. So J. M. P. Smith and Moffatt. W. R. Smith and Driver refer the leaping to the Philistine guards of the king. Some omit *on that day*.

⁵ The *Second* or New Town: cf. 2 Kings xxii. 14, 2 Chron. xxxiv 22, which state that the prophetess Huldah lived there. Cf. Neh. iii. 9, 12, xi. 9. On the Fishgate and Mishneh see the present writer's *Jerusalem*, I, 201, II, 260. The Heights may be the hills within the N.W. or S.W. of the city.

⁶ Or *Mortar*, the hollow probably between the western and eastern hills, or the upper part of the Tyropœon (Orelli), *Jerusalem*, I, 201 f.

⁷ Heb. *people of Canaan, merchant folk*.

Cut off all the dealers ¹ in money !

12. [*And in that time it shall be*]

With lamps I will search out Jerusalem,

And visit upon the men (?) ²

Who are stagnant upon their lees,

Who are saying within their hearts :

Yahweh, He doeth no good,

Neither doeth He evil ! ³

13. *And their wealth shall be for spoil*

And their houses for wasting. . . ⁴

14. *Nigh the Day of Yahweh, the Great,*

Nigh and fast speeding ! ⁵

Hark ⁶ the day of Yahweh, the bitter,

A hero there (?) ⁷ roaring.

15. *A Day of Wrath that Day, ⁸*

Day of stress and distress,

Day of wrecking and ruin, ⁹

Day of darkness and gloom,

Day of cloud and of murk;

16. *Day of the trump and the clamour of battle,*

Against the fortified cities,

And against the towers the topmost.

¹ נטיל, found only here, from נטל, *to lift*, and in Isa. xl. 15, *to weigh*. It may have a wider meaning, *all that carry money* (Davidson).

² For אנשים, *men*, some read שאננים.

³ See above, pp. 50 ff.

⁴ Heb. and versions add : *And they shall build houses and not inhabit* (Greek, *in them*), and *plant vineyards and not drink the wine thereof*. But the phrase is common (Deut. xxviii. 30; Amos v. 11: cf. Micah vi. 15), and while likely to have been inserted later, is superfluous, and mars the edge of Zephaniah's threat.

⁵ For מחר Wellhausen reads ממחר, pt. Pi.; but מחר may be a verbal adj.; compare the phrase מחר שלל, Isa. viii. 1.

⁶ So Heb. קול; but for this many read קרוב, *near*.

⁷ Very doubtful.

⁸ Dies Iræ, Dies Illa !

⁹ Heb. sho'ah u-mesho'ah.

1. 17. *And I shall beleaguer mankind,
And they shall walk like the blind.
[For they sinned against Yahweh]
And their blood shall be poured like dust,
And their flesh like dung.*
18. *Even their silver, even their gold,
Shall not be able to save them,¹
In the Day of the Wrath of Yahweh
And in the fire of His Zeal
The earth² shall all be devoured,
For an end shall He make yea a terrible
Of all the earth's,² dwellers.*

Upon this vision of absolute doom there follows³ a qualification for the meek and righteous. They may be hidden on the day of the Lord's anger; but even for them escape is only a possibility. Note the absence of mention of the Divine mercy. Zephaniah has no gospel of that kind. The conditions of escape are sternly ethical—meekness, the doing of justice and righteousness. So austere is our prophet.

- ii. 1.⁴ *Gather together, gather (?)⁵
O folk unabashed.⁶*

¹ Some take the first couplet of 18 as a gloss. See Schwally *in loco*.

² Or *land, land's*.

³ Read *תָּאֵךְ* for *תָּאֵךְ*. So LXX, Syr., Wellhausen, Schwally.

⁴ On vv. 1-3 of ch. ii., wrongly separated from ch. i, see Davidson.

⁵ Heb. *הִתְקַשְׁמוּ יַדְכֶּם יַחְדָּם*. A.V. *Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together* (*קוּשׁוּ* is to *gather straw or sticks*—cf. Arab. *kash*, to sweep up—and Nithp. of the Aram. is to assemble). Orelli: *Crowd and crouch down*. Ewald compares Aram. *kash*, late Heb. *קָשָׁה*, to grow old, which he believes originally meant *to be withered, grey*. Budde suggests *בָּשָׁה הַתְּבַשְׁשׁוּ*, but, as Davidson remarks, it is not easy to see how this, if once extant, was altered to the present reading.

⁶ *נִבְרָחָה* is thought to have as its root meaning *to be pale or colourless*, i.e., either white or black (*Journal of Phil.*, 14, 125), whence *כֶּסֶף*, silver

2. *Before ye become as drifting chaff,¹
Before comes upon you the wrath of Yahweh,
Before comes upon you the day of wrath.²*
3. *Seek ye Yahweh, all the meek of the land,
Who perform His ordinance,³
Seek ye right, seek ye meekness,
Peradventure ye hide you,
In the Day of the Anger of Yahweh.*

or *pale metal*: hence in the Qal *to long for*, Job xiv. 15, Ps. xvii. 12; so Ni. Gen. xxxi. 30, Ps. lxxxiv. 3; and here *to be ashamed*. But this derivation for silver is imaginary, and the colour of shame is red rather than white: cf. the mod. Arab saying, 'People that cannot blush; they have no blood in their faces,' *i.e.*, shameless. Indeed Schwally says (*in loco*), 'Die Bedeutung fahl, blass ist unerweislich.' Hence (in spite of the meanings of the Aram. כִּסְפָּה, both to lose colour and to be ashamed) a derivation for the Hebrew is more probably to be found in the root *kasaf*, to cut off. The Arab. كَسَفَ, which in the classic tongue means to cut a thread or eclipse the sun, is in colloquial Arabic to rebuff, refuse, disappoint, shame. In the forms *inkasaf* and *itkasaf* it means to receive a rebuff, be disappointed, then to be shy or timid, and *kasūf* means shame, shyness (as well as eclipse of the sun). See Spiro's *Arabic-English Vocabulary*. In Ps. lxxxiv. נִכְסַף is used of unsatisfied longing (but see Cheyne), which is also the proper meaning of the parallel כָּלָה (cf. other passages where כָּלָה is used of still unfulfilled or rebuffed hopes: Job xix. 27, Ps. lxix. 4, cxix. 81, cxliii. 7). So in Ps. xvii. 4 כִּסְפָּה is used of a lion who is longing for, *i.e.*, still disappointed in, his prey, and so in Job xiv. 15.

¹ LXX, πρὸ τοῦ γενέσθαι ὑμᾶς ὡς ἄνθος (here in error reading נֶץ for מֶץ) παραπορευόμενον, πρὸ τοῦ ἐπελθεῖν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ὄργην κυρίου (last clause omitted by ^{cl}). According to this the Hebrew text, which is obviously disarranged, may be restored to בְּתָרֶם לֹא־תִדְּחוּ כַּמֶּץ עֲבָר בְּתָרֶם לֹא־יָבֹא עֲלֵיכֶם חֲרוֹן יְהוָה.

² This line Wellhausen, etc., delete. Cf. Hexaplar Syriac translation.

³ LXX take this also as imperative, *do judgement*, and so co-ordinate to the other clauses.

CHAPTER IV

NINEVE DELENDÁ

ZEPHANIAH II. 4-15

THERE now come a series of oracles on foreign nations, connected with the previous prophecy by the conjunction *for*, and detailing the world-wide judgement which it had proclaimed. But though dated from the same period as that prophecy, *circa* 626, these oracles are best treated by themselves.¹

These oracles originally formed one passage in the well-known *Ḳinah* or elegiac measure; but this has suffered by dilapidation and rebuilding. How mangled the text is may be seen from vv. 6 and 14, where the Greek gives some help in restoring it. The verses (8-11) upon Moab and Ammon cannot be reduced to the metre which precedes and follows them. Probably they are a later addition: nor did Moab and Ammon lie in the way of the Scythians, presumably the invaders pictured by the prophet.²

The poem begins with Philistia and the sea-coast, the path of the Scythian raid.³ Evidently the latter is imminent, the Philistine cities are to be taken and the land reduced to grass. Across the emptied strip

¹ See above, pp. 41 f.

² Some think the prophet is speaking in prospect of the Chaldean invasion a few years later. This is not so likely, because he pictures the overthrow of Nineveh as subsequent to the invasion of Philistia, while the Chaldeans accomplished the latter only after Nineveh had fallen.

³ According to Herodotus.

the hope of Israel springs seaward ; but not yet with a vision of the isles beyond. The prophet is content to reach the edge of the Promised Land : *by the sea shall they feed*¹ their flocks.

ii. 4. *For Gaza forsaken shall be,
Ashk'lôn a desert.
Ashdod—by noon shall they rout her,
And Ekron be up torn !*²

5. *Woe to the dwellers on the shore of the sea,
Folk of Kerēthim.
The word of Yahweh upon thee, Kēna'an,³
Land of the Philistines !
And I destroy thee to the last inhabitant.*⁴

¹ Ver. 7, LXX.

² The measure is elegiac : alternate lines long with a rising, and short with a falling, cadence. There is a play upon the names, at least on the first and last—'Gazzah' or 'Azzah 'Azubah'—which in English we might reproduce by the use of Spenser's word for 'dreary' : *For Gaza ghastful shall be*. 'Ekron te'aḳer.' LXX, Ἀκκαρων ἐκριζωθήσεται (B), ἐκριφήσεται (A). In the second line is a slighter assonance, 'Ashkēlôn lishēmamah. In the third the verb is יִשְׂרְשֹׁן; Bacher (Z.A.T.W., 1891, 185 ff.) points out that יִשְׂרְשֹׁן is not used of cities, but of their populations or of individuals and suggests (from Abulwalid) יִירְשֹׁן, *shall possess her*. Schwally (*ibid.*, 260) prefers to alter to יִשְׂרְשֹׁן, with the remark that this is not only a parallel to תַּעֲקֶר, but suits the LXX, ἐκριφήσεται.—On *by noon* see Davidson, *N., H. and Z.*, Appendix, Note 2, where he quotes a parallel in the Senjerli inscription, of Asarhaddon : that he took Memphis by midday or in half a day (Schrader). This suits the use of the phrase in Jer. xv. 8, parallel to *suddenly*.

³ *Canaan* omitted by Wellhausen, who reads עֲלֶיךָ for עֲלֵיכֶם. But as the metre requires more accents in the first line of each couplet than in the second, Kēna'an should probably remain. The difficulty is the use of Canaan as synonymous with *Land of the Philistines*. Nowhere else in the O.T. is it specially applied to the coast south of Carmel, though it is so used in Egyptian inscriptions, and in the O.T. in a sense which covers this as well as other low-lying parts of Palestine.

⁴ An odd long line, either the remains of two, or perhaps we should take the two previous lines as one, omitting Canaan

- ii. 6. *And Kereth shall be for the cots of shepherds,¹
And folds for flocks,*
7. *And the coast² for the remnant of Judah's house,
By the sea³ shall they feed.
In Ashkelon's houses at eve shall they couch;
For Yahweh their God shall visit them,
And turn their captivity.⁵*

Comes now an oracle upon Moab and Ammon (vv. 8–11), not in the measure which precedes and follows it, while other features cast doubt upon its authenticity.⁶ Like other oracles on the same peoples, this denounces the loud-mouthed arrogance of Moab and Ammon.

8. *[I have heard⁷ the reviling of Moab,
The insults of the sons of Ammon,
Who have reviled My people,
And vaunted upon their⁸ border.*
9. *So as I live, Rede of Yahweh,
God of the hosts of Israel,
Moab shall become as Sodom,
And Ammon's sons as Gomorrah,*

¹ So LXX: Heb. *and the sea-coast shall become dwellings, cots* (כִּרְת) *of shepherds*. But the pointing and meaning of כִּרְת are conjectural, and the *sea-coast* wanting in LXX has probably fallen into this verse from the next. On Kereth and Kerethim as for Philistia and Philistines see *Hist. Geog.*, p. 171.

² LXX adds *of the sea*. So Wellhausen, but improbably for phonetic reasons, as *sea* has to be read in the next line.

³ So Wellhausen, reading, for עֲלֵיהֶם, עֲלֵיהֶם.

⁴ Some words must have fallen out, for a short line is required by the metre, and the LXX have additional words, which give us no help to the lost line: ἀπὸ προσώπου νύκτ' Ἰούδα.

⁵ As stated above, there is no conclusive reason against the pre-exilic date of this expression. But most critics take all ver. 7 as editorial.

⁶ Above, p. 42.

⁷ Cf. Isa. xvi. 6.

⁸ LXX, *My*.

*The hold¹ of nettles and salt-pits,²
And desolation for ever.*

*My people's remnant shall spoil them,
And the rest of My folk inherit them.*

10. *This is to them for their arrogance,
That they reviled the people of³ Yahweh.*

11. *Yahweh is terrible⁴ against them,
Lean⁵ hath He made all the gods of the earth,
That each from his place,⁶ may bow to Him
All the coasts of the nations.]*

The next oracle is short (ver. 12) upon Egypt, which after its subjection to Ethiopic dynasties is called, not Mišraim, but Kush, or Ethiopia. The verse follows ver. 7, but is not reducible to the elegiac measure.

12. *Also, O Kushites, ye
Are the slain of My sword.⁷*

The elegiac measure is now renewed⁸ in an oracle against Assyria, the climax and front of heathendom (vv. 13-15). It must have been written before 608; there is no reason to doubt that it is Zephaniah's; though J. M. P. Smith takes ver. 15 as the addition of

¹ Doubtful word, not occurring elsewhere.

² Heb. singular.

³ LXX omits *the people of*: Heb. adds *and vaunted*, and (after *Yahweh*) *of Hosts*.

⁴ LXX, *maketh Himself manifest*, נראה for נראה.

⁵ ἄπαξ λεγόμενον. The passive of the verb means *to grow lean* (Isa. xvii. 4).

⁶ מקום has probably here the sense which it has in a few other passages of the old Testament, and in Arabic, of *sacred place*.

Many will share Schwally's doubts (p. 192) of the authenticity of ver. 11; nor, as Wellhausen points out, does its prediction of the conversion of the heathen agree with ver. 12, which devotes them to destruction. Ver. 12 follows naturally on ver. 7.

⁷ Wellhausen reads *His sword*, to agree with the next verse. Perhaps חרב יהוה is an abbreviation for חרב יהוה.

⁸ See Budde, *Z.A.T.W.*, 1882, 25.

a pious reader, and compounded of well-known common phrases.

ii. 13. *He will stretch forth His Hand on the north
And Ashûr destroy,
And Nineveh turn to a waste,
As dry as the desert.*

14. *And herds shall couch in her midst
Every beast of the land.¹
Pelican and bittern ² also
Shall roost on her capitals,
Owls will hoot in the windows
On the threshold the raven.³*

15. *Such is the City the Jubilant,
She that sitteth at ease,
She that saith in her heart, I am
And there is none else !
How is she become desolation,
A lair of beasts !
Every one passing her hisses,
Shakes his hand.*

¹ So LXX ; Heb. reads *a nation*, and Wellhausen translates *ein buntes Gemisch von Volk*.

² קאת, a water-bird, Deut. xiv. 17, Lev. xi. 18, mostly taken as *pelican*, so R.V. A.V. *cormorant*. קפד has been taken from קפר, to draw together, therefore *hedgehog* or *porcupine*. But the others mentioned are birds, and birds would naturally roost on capitals. Therefore *bittern* is the better rendering (Hitzig, Cheyne). The name is onomatopœic. Cf. Eng. butter-dump. LXX, *chameleons and hedgehogs*.

³ Heb. *a voice shall sing in the window, desolation on the threshold, for He shall uncover the cedar-work*. LXX, καὶ θηρία φωνήσει ἐν τοῖς διορύγμασιν αὐτῆς, κόρακες ἐν τοῖς πυλῶσιν αὐτῆς, διότι κέδρος τὸ ἀνάστημα αὐτῆς: Wild beasts shall sound in her excavations, ravens in her porches, because (the) cedar is her height. For קול, *voice*, Wellhausen reads כוס, *owl*, and with LXX, ערב, *raven*, for חרב, *desolation*. The last two words are left untranslated above. ארקה occurs only here and is taken to mean cedar-work ; but might be pointed *her cedar*. ערה, *le, or one, has stripped the cedar-work*.

The essence of these oracles is their confidence in the fall of Nineveh. From 652, when Egypt revolted from Assyria, and, Ashurbanipal notwithstanding, began to push north, men must have felt, through Western Asia, that the empire upon the Tigris was beginning to weaken. This feeling was strengthened by the Scythian invasion, and after 625 it became a moral certainty that Nineveh would fall¹—which happened in 607–606. These are the feelings, 625 to 608, which Zephaniah's oracles reflect. We can hardly overestimate what they meant. Not a man was then alive who had ever known anything but the greatness of Assyria. It was two hundred and thirty years since Israel first felt the weight of her arms,² more than a hundred since her hosts had swept through Palestine,³ and for at least fifty her supremacy had been accepted by Judah. Now the colossus began to totter. As she had menaced, so she was menaced. The ruins with which for nigh three centuries she had strewn Western Asia—to these was to be reduced her ancient and impregnable glory. The close of an epoch.

¹ See above, pp. 16, 17.

² At the battle of Karkar, 854.

³ Under Tiglath-Pileser in 734.

CHAPTER V

SO AS BY FIRE

ZEPHANIAH III

THE third chapter of the Book of Zephaniah consists¹ of three sections, of which the first two, vv. 1-13, are a genuine work of the prophet; while the third, vv. 14-20, is an epilogue such as we found added to the prophecies of Amos. It is written in the hope and temper of the Second Isaiah, with no word of Judah's sin or judgement, but predicting her deliverance from her afflictions.

In this fresh address to his City (vv. 1-13) Zephaniah strikes the same notes as he did in his first. He spares the king, but denounces the ruling and teaching classes. Jerusalem's princes are lions, her judges wolves, her prophets braggarts, her priests pervert the law, her wicked have no shame. He repeats the proclamation of a universal doom. But the time is perhaps later. Judah has disregarded the many threats. She accepts not the Lord's discipline; and while in ch. i-ii. 3 Zephaniah said that the meek and righteous might escape the doom, he now affirms that all proud and impenitent men shall be removed from Jerusalem, and a humble people be left, righteous and secure. There is the same moral earnestness as before, the same absence of other elements of prophecy than the ethical.

¹ See above, pp. 43 ff.

Before we ask the reason and emphasise the beauty of this austere gospel, let us see its exact words. There are the usual marks of poetic diction—elliptic phrases, the frequent absence of the definite article, archaic forms and an order of syntax different from what obtains in prose. But the measure is difficult to determine; the lines are mostly of two or three beats each with an occasional four. The echo of the elegiac rhythm in the opening is more apparent than real: it is not sustained beyond the first verse. Verses 9 and 10 are relegated to a footnote, as probably an intrusion, and certainly interrupting the connection between 8 and 11.

- iii. 1. *Woe, O defiant, defiled,
Cruellest city!*¹
2. *Not a voice does she list to,
Accepts no discipline,
In Yahweh she trusts not
Nor draws to her God.*
3. *Her princes within her
Are roaring lions.
Her judges wolves of the evening,²
Leaving (?)³ nought till the morn.*

¹ Heb. *the city the oppressor*. The two participles in the first line are not predicates to the noun and adjective of the second line (Schwally), but vocatives, though without the article, after *הָעִיר*.

² LXX, *wolves of Arabia*.

³ This verb *נָרַם*, is uncertain. *נָרַם* is a common Semitic root, and seems to mean *to cut off*, while the noun *נֶרֶם* is a *bone*. In Num. xxiv. 8 the Piel of the verb used with another word for *bone* means *to gnaw, munch*. (Ezek. xxiii. 34, is corrupt.) So some take it here: *they do not gnaw bones till morning, i.e., devour all at once*; but this is awkward, and Schwally (198) proposes to omit the negative, *they do gnaw bones*, etc., yet in that case the impf. and not the perf. might have been expected. The LXX render *they do not leave over*, and it has been attempted, though inconclusively, to derive this meaning from that of *cutting off, i.e., laying aside* (the Arabic Form II means, however, *to leave behind*). In Aram.

- iii. 4. *The prophets foolhardy,
 Treacherous fellows !
 Her priests profane what is holy,¹
 They have abused the Torah.*
5. *Yahweh is righteous within her,
 He doeth no wrong !
 Morning by morning He giveth His judgement,
 In light never failing !²
 [But no shame knows the unjust.]³*
6. *I have cut off the nations,
 Ruined are their ramparts,
 I have laid waste their streets,
 So that none passes over.
 Destroyed are their cities
 Without an inhabitant.⁴*
7. *I said, Sure she will fear me,
 She will take punishment.⁵
 Nor cut off from her eyes⁶
 Shall be all I have visited on her.⁷
 But they hastened the more to corrupt
 All of their doings.⁸*

the verb means *to be the cause of, to bring about*, and perhaps contains the idea of *deciding* (Levy *sub voce* compares κρίνω, *cerno*) ; in Arab. it means, among other things, *to commit a crime, be guilty*, but in mod. Arabic *to fine*. Here the expression is used of *judges*, and there may be a play upon the double possibility of meaning in the root. Wellhausen, Marti, Fagnani omit the line.

¹ Cf. Ezek. xxii. 26, Jer. ii. 8.

² Schwally, *no day does He fail*.

³ This line is doubtful. Eliminating shame as a gloss, Marti renders *error is unknown*.

⁴ On this ver. 6 see above, p. 43. It is doubtful. Heb. adds in last line *so there is no man*, but this is superfluous, both in meaning and metre.

⁵ Or *discipline*.

⁶ So LXX, reading מַעֲיִינָהּ for the Heb. מַעֲוָנָהּ, *her dwelling*.

⁷ Wellhausen: *that which I have commanded her*. Cf. Job xxxv. 23 ; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 23 ; Ezra i. 2.

⁸ A frequent phrase of Jeremiah's.

8. *Therefore wait for Me—Rede of Yahweh—**For the day of My rising to testify.**My decree¹ is to gather the nations,**To assemble the realms,**To pour out Mine anger² upon them,**All the heat of My wrath,**Yea, with the fire of My zeal,**All the earth shall be swallowed.³*II. *That day thou shalt not be ashamed,⁴**About all thy doings,**Wherewith thou rebellest against Me,⁵**For then will I clear from thy midst**Those who exult in thine arrogance,⁶**And thou wilt be haughty no more**On the Mount of My Holiness.*¹ מִשְׁפָּטִי, ordinance, decision.² LXX omits.³ The prophet returns to that judgement of the whole earth, with which he had already threatened Judah. He threatens it again because, as he has said in the preceding verse, other warnings have failed. The eighth verse thus follows upon the seventh as naturally as Amos iv. 12, introduced by the same לָכֵן as here, follows its predecessors. The nexttwo verses, however, describe an opposite result: instead of the destruction of the heathen, they picture their conversion, and it is only in the eleventh that we return to the main subject of the passage, Judah herself, who is represented (in harmony with the close of Zephaniah's first discourse) as reduced to a righteous remnant. Vv. 9 and 10 are therefore obviously a later insertion, and we pass as above to the eleventh verse. Vv. 9 and 10: *For then* (this has no meaning after ver. 8) *will I give to the peoples a pure lip* (elliptic: *turn to the peoples a pure lip—i.e., turn their evil lip into a pure lip*: pure = *picked, select, excellent*, cf. Isa. xlix. 2), *that they may all of them call on the name of the Lord, that they may serve Him with one consent* (Heb. *shoulder*, LXX, *yoke*). *From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia*—then an obscure phrase, עֲתָרֵי בְתִפּוּצֵי, *suppliants* (?) *of the daughter of My dispersed*, but Ewald and others of *the daughter of Phut—they shall bring Mine offering*.⁴ Wellhausen, *despair*.⁵ It is doubtful whether this line is original. It breaks a series of couplets.⁶ Heb. *the jubilant ones of thine arrogance*.

- iii. 12. *But I will have left in thy midst
A people humble and poor,¹
And trusting in Yahweh's Name ²*
13. *Shall the Remnant of Israel be.
No wickedness shall they be doing
Nor be uttering lies.
There shall not be found in their mouth
A tongue of deceit.
But pasture they shall and couch
With none to make them afraid.*

Such is the simple and austere gospel of Zephaniah. It is not to be overlooked amid the lavish promises which other prophets have poured around it, and by ourselves, too, it is needed in our sometimes unscrupulous enjoyment of the riches of grace in Christ Jesus. A thorough purgation, the removal of the wicked, the sparing of the honest and the meek ; insistence only upon the rudiments of morality and religion ; faith in its simplest form of trust in a righteous God, and character in its basal elements of meekness and truth, —these alone survive the judgement. Why does Zephaniah never talk of the Love of God, of the Divine Patience, of the Grace that has spared and will spare wicked hearts if only it can touch them to penitence ? Why has he no call to repent, no appeal to the wicked to turn from evil ? We have seen part of the answer. Zephaniah stands too near to judgement and the last things. Character is fixed, the time for pleading is past ; there remains only the separation of bad men from good. It is the same standpoint (ethically) as that of Christ's visions of the Judgement. Also an

¹ *Poor in spirit : Isaiah i-xxxix, pp. 453 ff.*

² This last line of ver. 12 obviously goes with the first of 13 : so Marti, Nowack, Fagnani, Rothstein and J. M. P. Smith.

austere gospel was required by the fashionable temper of the day. The generation was arrogant ; it gilded the future to excess, and knew no shame.¹ The prophet was forced to reticence ; he must make his age feel the desperate earnestness of life, that salvation is by fire. For the gorgeous future of its hopes he must give this severe, almost mean, picture of a poor and humble folk, hardly saved but at last at peace.

The permanent value of such a message is proved by the thirst which we feel to-day for the cold water of its simple promises. Where a glaring optimism prevails, and the future is preached with a loud assurance, where many find their only religious enthusiasm in the resurrection of mediæval ritual or the singing of hymns of second-hand imagery, how needful to be recalled to the earnestness and severity of life, to the simplicity of the conditions of salvation, and to their ethical, not emotional, character ! Where sensationalism has invaded religion, how good to hear the sober insistence upon God's daily commonplaces—*morning by morning He bringeth forth His judgement to light*—and to know that the acceptance of discipline is what prevails with Him. Where political reform is vaunted and the progress of education, how well to go back to a prophet who ignored the reforms of his day that he might impress his people with the indispensableness of humility and faith. Where Churches have large ambitions for themselves, how necessary to hear that the future is destined for *a poor folk*, the meek and the honest. Where men boast that their religion—Bible, Creed or Church—has undertaken to save them, *vaunting themselves on the Mount of My Holiness*, how needful to hear salvation placed upon character and trust in God.

But, on the other hand, is any one in despair at the

¹ See vv. 4, 5, 11.

darkness and cruelty of life, let him hear how that, though all else be fraud, *the Lord is righteous in the midst of us, He doth not let Himself fail*, that the resigned heart and humble, the just and the pure, is imperishable, and in the end there is peace.

EPILOGUE

VERSES 14-20

Zephaniah's prophecy was fulfilled. The Day of the Lord came, and the people met their judgement. The Remnant survived—*a folk humble and poor*. To them, in the new estate and temper of their life, came a new song or songs from God—perhaps nearly a hundred years after Zephaniah had spoken—and they added it, or them, to his prophecies.¹ It came with fitness, for it was the song of the redeemed, whom he had foreseen, and it tuned his book, severe and simple, to the harmony of prophecy, so that his book might take a place in the choir of Israel—the diapason of that salvation which no one man, but only the experience of centuries, could achieve.²

- iii. 14. *Ring out, O daughter of Sion,
Shout ye, Israel,
Rejoice and exult with all the heart,
Daughter of Jerusalem.*
15. *Yahweh hath removed thy judgements,³
He hath turned thy foes.*

¹ So most critics ; nearly all, since Kuenen and Schwally. See above pp 43 f.

² The unity of this section is not clear. Ver. 16 interrupts the metre as well as the connection of 15 with 17, as is generally recognised ; and the prose ver. 20, a mere variation on 19, seems also an addition.

³ מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ. But Wellhausen and others read מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ, *thine adversaries* : cf. Job ix. 15.

*Yahweh is king in thy midst,
Thou shalt see¹ no more evil.*

16. *That day 'twill be said to Jerusalem
Be not afraid, O Sion !
Let not thy hands droop !*

17. *Yahweh, thy God, in thy midst,
Mighty² to save.
With joy He will rejoice upon thee
He will renew (?)³ His love,
Exult upon thee with singing,*

18. *As in the day of the Feast.⁴
I have swept from thee the disgrace,
And lifted from thee the reproach.⁵*

19. *Lo, I am about to do
All for the sake of thee.⁶*

¹ Reading תִּירָאִי (with LXX, Wellhausen and Schwally) for תִּירָאִי of Heb. MSS., *fear*.

² Lit. *hero, mighty man*.

³ Heb. *will be silent in*, יִחַרְיֶשׁ, but not in harmony with the next clause.

LXX and Syr. render *will make new*, which translates יִחַדְיֶשׁ, a form that does not else occur, though that is no objection to finding it in Zephaniah, or יִחַדְיֶשׁ. Hitzig: *He makes new things in His love*. Buhl: *He renews His love*. Schwally suggests יִחַדְדֶה, *He rejoices in His love*. Some reject this line, others the next.

⁴ So LXX, Nowack, Fagnani, and Duhm taking the line with the previous verse. The Heb. is ungrammatical, though not unprecedented—the construct state before a preposition. Besides נִנְחִי is obscure in meaning. It is a Ni. pt. for נִנְחֶה from נִנַּח, *to be sad*: cf. the Pi. in Lam. iii. 33. But the Hiphil דִּנְחֶה in 2 Sam. xx. 13, followed (as here) by מִן, means *to thrust away from*, and some take this as the meaning here.

⁵ LXX, *thine oppressed* in acc. governed by the preceding verb, which in LXX begins the verse. The Heb. מִשְׁאָת, *burden of*, is unintelligible.

Wellhausen proposes מִשְׁאָת עֲיָהֶם. Marti's proposed reading is preferable, and adopted above.

⁶ This rendering is only a venture in the impossible task of restoring the text of the clause. As it stands the Heb. runs, *Behold, I am about*

- iii. 19. *And I will deliver the lame,
And will gather the outcast in,¹
And set them for praise and a name,
Whose shame is (?) in all the earth.²*

20. *That time I will bring you in,³ that time I will gather you, when I set you for a name and for praise among all the peoples of the earth, when I turn again your fortune before your eyes,⁴ saith Yahweh.*

to do, or deal, with thine oppressors (which Hitzig and Ewald accept) Schwally points מַעֲנִיךָ (active) as a passive, מַעֲנִיךָ, *thine oppressed*.

LXX has ἡ δὸς ἐγὼ ποιῶ ἐν σοὶ ἔνεκεν σοῦ, *i.e.*, it read אֶתְּךָ לְמַעַן.

Following its suggestion we might read אֶת־כָּל לְמַעַן, and so get the above translation.

¹ Micah iv. 6.

² This rendering (Ewald's) is doubtful. The verse concludes with *in the whole earth their shame*. But כָּשֶׁתָם may be a gloss. LXX take it as a verb with the next verse.

³ LXX, *do good to you*; perhaps אָשִׁיב for אָבִיא.

⁴ *Before your eyes, i.e.*, in your lifetime. It is doubtful whether ver. 20 is original. For it is simply a prosaic variation on 19, and has more than one impossible reading: see previous note, and for שְׁבוֹתֵיכֶם read שְׁבוֹתֵכֶם.

MAHUM

*Woe to the City of Blood,
All of her falsehood,
Filled up with plunder,
Rapine unending !*

*Hark to the whip,
Hark rumble of wheels,
Horses at gallop
And racketing chariots !*

*Cavalry charging,
Flashing of sabres,
Lightning of lances,
Masses of slain !*

CHAPTER VI

THE BOOK OF NAHUM

THE Book of Nahum consists of a double title and three odes. The title runs *Oracle of Nineveh : Book of the Vision of Nahum the Elkōshite*. It is probably composite, and those may be right who consider *Oracle of Nineveh* and *Book of* to be later additions to the rest.¹ The three odes, eager and passionate pieces, are apparently vibrant to the impending fall of Assyria, though we shall find reasons for doubting the authenticity of the first. The first, ch. i with the possible inclusion of ch. ii. 2,² is general and theological, affirming God's power of vengeance and the certainty of the overthrow of His enemies. The second, ch. ii with the omission of ver. 2, and the third, ch. iii, can hardly be disjoined ; they both present a vivid picture of the siege, the storm and the spoiling of Nineveh.

The introductory questions, which title and contents start, are in the main three : 1. The position of Elkōsh, to which the title assigns the prophet ; 2. The authenticity of ch. i ; 3. The date of chs. ii, iii : to which siege of Nineveh do they refer ?

¹ Budde, Marti, etc.

² In the English version, but the Hebrew begins ch. ii with what in the English and Greek is the fifteenth verse of ch. i : *Behold, upon the mountains, etc.*

I. THE POSITION OF ELḲÔSH

The title calls Nahum *the ElḲôshite*—that is, native or citizen of ElḲôsh.¹ Three positions have been claimed for this place, which is not mentioned elsewhere in the Bible.

The first we take is the modern Al-Ḳûsh, a town about twenty-six miles to the north of the site of Nineveh,² with 'no fragments of antiquity,' but possessing a 'simple plaster box,' which Jews, Christians and Mohammedans alike reverence as the tomb of Nahum.³ There is no evidence that Al-Ḳûsh, a name of Arabic form, is older than the Arab period, while the tradition which locates the tomb there is not found before the sixteenth century, while Nahum's grave was pointed out to Benjamin of Tudela in 1165 at 'Ain Japhata, south of Babylon.⁴ The tradition that the prophet lived and died at Al-Ḳûsh is therefore due to the similarity of the name to that of Nahum's ElḲôsh, as well as to the fact that Nineveh was the subject of his prophesying.⁵ In his book there is no trace of proof for the assertion that Nahum was a descendant of the ten tribes exiled in 721 to the region to the north of Al-Ḳûsh. He prophesies for Judah alone. Nor does he show any more knowledge of Nineveh than her ancient fame must have scattered to the limits of the world.⁶ We might as well argue from ch. iii. 8-10 that Nahum had visited Thebes of Egypt.

¹ Which LXX reads as ElḲeshe, and Budde (*Gesch.* 89) prefers this.

² So it lies on Billerbeck's map in Delitzsch and Haupt's *Beiträge zur Assyriologie*, III, 1898, pp. 87-188.

³ Layard, *Nineveh and its Remains*, I, 233, 3rd ed., 1849.

⁴ Bohn's *Early Travels in Palestine*, p. 102.

⁵ Just as they show Jonah's tomb at Nineveh itself.

⁶ See above, p. 18.

The second tradition of the position of Elkôsh is older. In his commentary on Nahum Jerome says that in his day it existed, a village of Galilee, under the name of Helkesei,¹ or Elkese, and apparently with an established reputation as the town of Nahum.² But the book bears no symptom of its author having had any connection with Galilee, and although it was possible for a prophet of that period to have lived there, this is not probable.³

A third tradition places Elkôsh in the south of Judah. A Syriac version of the accounts of the prophets, falsely ascribed to Epiphanius, describes Nahum as 'of Elkôsh beyond Bêt Gabrê, of the tribe of Simeon';⁴

¹ Just as in Micah's case Jerome calls his birthplace Moreseth by the adjective Morasthi, so with equal carelessness he calls Elkôsh by the adjective with the article Ha-elkoshi, the Elkoshite. Jerome's words are: 'Quum Elcese usque hodie in Galilea viculus sit, parvus quidem et vix ruinis veterum ædificiorum indicans vestigia, sed tamen notus Judæis et mihi quoque a circumducente monstratus' (in *Prol. ad Prophetiam Nachumi*). In the *Onomasticon* Jerome gives the name as Elcese, Eusebius as Ἐλκεσέ but without defining the position. Cornill (Introû.) accepts a Galilean site.

² This Elkese has been identified with the modern El Kauze near Ramieh, S.W. of Tibnin; but there is also Tell-el-Kôwâs, *Survey of W. Palestine, Name Lists*.

³ Cf. Kuenen, § 75, n. 5; Davidson, p. 12 (2).

Capernaum, which the Textus Receptus gives as Καπερναούμ, but most authorities as Καφαρναούμ and the Peshitto as Kaphar Nahum, obviously means Village of Nahum, and both Hitzig and Knobel looked for Elkôsh in it. See *Hist. Geog.*, p. 456.

Against the Galilean origin of Nahum it is usual to appeal to John vii. 52: *Search and see that out of Galilee ariseth no prophet*; but this is not decisive, for Jonah came out of Galilee.

⁴ This occurs in the Syriac translation of the Old Testament by Paul of Tella, 617 A.D., in which the notices of Epiphanius (Bishop of Constantia in Cyprus A.D. 367) or Pseudepiphanius are attached to their respective prophets. It was first communicated to the *Z.D.P.V.*, I, 122 ff., by Nestle: cf. *Hist. Geog.*, p. 231, n. 1. The previously known readings of the passage were either geographically impossible, as 'He came from Elkesei beyond Jordan, towards Begabar of the tribe of Simeon' (so in Paris edition, 1622, of the works of St. Epiphanius,

and it may be noted that Cyril of Alexandria says¹ that Elkese was a village in the country of the Jews. This tradition is superior to the first in that there is no apparent motive for its fabrication, and to the second in so far as Judah was at the time of Nahum a much more probable home for a prophet than Galilee; nor does the book give any references except such as might be made by a Judæan.² No modern place-name, however, can be suggested with any certainty as the echo of Elḵôsh. Umm Lâḵis, which has been proved not to be Lachish, contains the same radicals, and some six and a quarter miles east from Beit-Jibrin at the upper end of the Wady es Sur there is an ancient well with the name Bir el Ḳûs.³

Vol. II, p. 147: cf. Migne, *Patr. Gr.*, XLIII, 409); or based on a misreading of the title of the book: 'Nahum son of Elkesaios was of Jesbe of the tribe of Simeon'; or indefinable: 'Nahum was of Elkesem beyond Betabarem of the tribe of Simeon'; these last two from recensions of Epiphanius published in 1855 by Tischendorf (quoted by Davidson, p. 13). In the Στιχηρὸν τῶν ἸΒ' Προφητῶν καὶ Ἰσαίου, attributed to Hesychius, Presbyter of Jerusalem, who died 428 or 433 (Migne, *Patr. Gr.*, XCIII, 1357), it is said that Nahum was ἀπὸ Ἑλκεσίων (Helcesin) πέραν τοῦ τηνβαρεῖν ἐκ φυλῆς Συμεών; to which has been added a note from Theophylact, Ἑλκασαὶ πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου εἰς Βρυαβρί.

¹ Ad Nahum i. 1 (Migne, *Patr. Gr.*, LXXI, 780): Κώμη δὲ αὕτη πάντως ποῦ τῆς Ἰουδαίων χώρας.

² The selection Bashan, Carmel and Lebanon (i. 4) does not prove northern authorship.

³ אֱלִיקוֹשׁ may be (1) a theophorous name = Ḳosh is God; and Ḳosh might then be the Edomite deity קוֹם whose name is spelt with a Shin on the Assyrian monuments (Baethgen, *Beiträge z. Semit. Religionsgeschichte*, p. 11; Schrader, *K.A.T.*², pp. 150, 613), and who is probably the same as the Arab deity Ḳais (Baethgen, *id.*, p. 108); and this would suit a position in south Judah, where we find the majority of place-names compounded with אֱל. Or (2) the א is prosthetic, as in the place-names אֱלִיבֶן on the Phœnician coast, אֱלִישָׁה in S. Canaan, אֱלִישָׁר, etc. In this case we might find its equivalent in the form אֱלִיקוֹשׁ (cf. אֱלִיבֶן); but no such form is extant or previously recorded. The form Lâḵis would not suit. On Bir el Ḳûs see Robinson, *B.R.*, III, p. 14, and Guérin, *Judée*, III, p. 341. Bir el Ḳûs

2. THE AUTHENTICITY OF CHAP. I

Till 1893 no one doubted that the three chapters formed a unity. 'Nahum's prophecy,' said Kuenen in 1889, 'is a whole.' In 1891 Cornill¹ affirmed that no questions of authenticity arose in regard to the book; and in 1892 Wellhausen saw in ch. i an introduction leading 'in no awkward way to the proper subject of the prophecy.'

Meantime, however, Bickell,² discovering what he thought to be the remains of an alphabetic Psalm in ch. i. 1-7, attempted to reconstruct throughout chs. i-ii. 3 twenty-two verses, each beginning with a letter of the alphabet. And, following this, Gunkel in 1893 produced a more full and plausible reconstruction of the same scheme.³ By emendations of the text, by excision of what he believes to be glosses and by altering the order of many of the verses, Gunkel offers twenty-three distichs, twenty of which begin with the successive letters of the alphabet, two are wanting, while in the first three letters of the twenty-third, שׁבִי, he finds probable the name of the author, Shobai or Shobi.⁴ He takes this ode, therefore, to be an eschatological Psalm of the later Judaism, which from its

means Well of the Bow, or, according to Guérin, of the Arch, from ruins that stand by it. The position, *east* of Beit-Jibrin, is unsuitable; for the texts quoted in the previous note fix it *beyond*, presumably S. or S.W. of Beit-Jibrin, in the tribe of Simeon. The error 'tribe of Simeon' does not matter, for the same fathers place Bethzecharias, the alleged birthplace of Habakkuk, there.

¹ *Einleitung*, 1st ed.

² Who seems to have owed the hint to a quotation by Delitzsch on Psalm ix from G. Frohnmeyer to the effect that there were traces of 'alphabetic' verses in ch. i, at least in vv. 3-7. See Bickell's *Beiträge zur Semit. Metrik*, Separatabdruck, Wien, 1894.

³ *Z.A.T.W.*, 1893, pp. 223 ff.

⁴ Cf. Ezra ii. 42; Neh. vii. 45; 2 Sam. xvii. 27.

theological bearing has been thought a suitable introduction to Nahum's prophecies.

The text of chs. i-ii. 4 has been mauled and is clamant for reconstruction. As it lies, there are traces of an alphabetical arrangement as far as the beginning of ver. 10,¹ and so far Gunkel's changes are comparatively simple. Many of his emendations are, in themselves and apart from the alphabetic scheme, desirable. They get rid of difficulties and improve the poetry of the passage.² His reconstruction is clever and as a whole forms a spirited poem. But to have produced good or poetical Hebrew is not conclusive proof of having recovered the original, and there are objections to the process. Several of the proposed changes are unnatural and unsupported save by the exigencies of the scheme; for example, 2*b* and 3*a* are dismissed as a gloss only because, if they be retained, the *Aleph* verse is two bars too long. The gloss, Gunkel thinks, was introduced to mitigate the absoluteness of the declaration that Yahweh is a God of wrath and vengeance; but this would hardly have been alleged apart from the needs of the alphabetic scheme. In order to find a *Daleth*, it is arbitrary to say that the first אמלל in 4*b* is redundant in face of the second, and that a word beginning with *Daleth* originally filled its place, but was removed because it was a difficult word! The rearrangement of 7 and 8*a* is ingenious,

¹ Ver. 1 is title; 2 begins with א; ב is found in בסופה, 3*b*; ג in גוער, 4; ד is wanting—Bickell proposes to substitute a New-Hebrew word דצק, Gunkel דאב, for אמלל, 4*b*; ה in הרים, 5*a*; ו in ותשא, 5*b*; ז by removing לפני of ver. 6*a* to the end of the clause (and reading it there לפניו), and so leaving זעמו as the last word; ח in חמתו in 6*b*; ט in טב, 7*a*; י by eliding ו from וידע, 7*b*; כ in כלה, 8; ל is wanting, though Gunkel seeks to supply it by taking 9*c* beginning לא, with 9*b*, before 9*a*; מ begins 9*a*; נ 10.

² See below in the translation.

and reads as if right ; but the next effort, to get a verse beginning with *Lamed*, is of the kind by which anything might be proved. These, however, are nothing to the difficulties which vv. 9-14 and ch. ii. 1, 3, present to an alphabetic scheme, or to the means which Gunkel takes to surmount them. He has to rearrange the order of the verses,¹ and of the words within the verses. The distichs beginning with *Nun* and *Ḳoph* are wanting, or at least undecipherable. To provide one with initial *Resh* the interjection has to be removed from the opening of ch. ii. 1, and the verse made to begin with רנלי and to run thus : *the feet of him that bringeth good news on the mountains ; behold him that publisheth peace*. Other unlikely changes will be noticed when we come to the translation. Here we may ask : if the passage was originally alphabetic, that is, furnished with so fixed and easily recognised a frame, why has it so fallen to pieces ? And again, if it has so fallen to pieces, is it possible to restore it ? The many arbitrarinesses of Gunkel's able essay would seem to imply that it is not. Davidson says : ' Even if it should be assumed that an alphabetical poem lurks under ch. i, the attempt to restore it, just as in Psalm x, can never be more than an academic exercise.'

Kennedy thinks this opinion rash, and regards Gunkel's scheme as succeeding ' not only in proving . . . in vv. 2-9 a clearly designed acrostic arrangement for the first half of the alphabet (*aleph* to *lamed*), but in establishing a strong probability that the same arrangement for the second half appeared in the verses following.' Budde concedes that there was once a complete alphabet, but wisely adds that any attempt at restoration cannot be rewarded with full success.

¹ As thus : 9a, 11b, 12 (but unintelligible), 10, 13, 14, ii. 1, 3.

Marti, Haupt and J. M. P. Smith carry the alphabet up to the letter *samekh* and ver. 10, Nowack right to the end of the alphabet and ch. ii. 3. Kautzsch suggests the possibility that the acrostic form has been superimposed by a later scribe whose efforts failed when he reached ver. 8 and the letter *kaph*.

Little is to be learned from the language. Wellhausen, who makes no objection to the genuineness of the passage, thinks that about ver. 7 we catch the dialect of the Psalms. Gunkel finds a want of originality in the language, with touches that betray connection not only with the Psalms but with late eschatological literature. But when we take one by one the clauses of ch. i, we discover few parallels with the Psalms, which are not at the same time parallels with Jeremiah's or earlier writings. That the prophecy is vague, and with much of the air of the later eschatology about it, is no conclusive reason for removing it from an age in which we have seen prophecy beginning to show the apocalyptic temper.¹ Gunkel denies any reference in ver. 9b to the approaching fall of Nineveh, although that is seen by Kuenen, Wellhausen, König and others, and he omits ver. 11a, in which some have read an allusion to Sennacherib.

Therefore, while it is possible that a later poem has been prefixed to the genuine prophecies of Nahum, and the first chapter supplies many provocations to belief in such a theory, this has not been proved, and the able essays of proof have much against them. The question is open.²

So I wrote in the first edition of this work. But subsequent criticism by Kautzsch, Kennedy, Budde

¹ See above on Zephaniah, pp. 48 ff.

² Cornill, in the 2nd ed. of his *Einleitung*, accepted Gunkel's and Bickell's main contentions

and J. M. P. Smith convinces me that this section of the book is from a date after the Exile. In particular J. M. P. Smith wisely remarks that 'the acrostic form . . . seems too mechanical and artificial for a poet of Nahum's vigour and freshness.' For Haupt's and Marti's relegation of the section to the Maccabean period and for Happel's relegation of the whole book to that period, I find no conclusive reasons.

3. THE DATE OF CHAPS. II AND III

We turn now to the date of the book apart from this prologue. It was written after a great overthrow of the Egyptian Thebes¹ and when the overthrow of Nineveh was imminent. Now Thebes had been devastated by Ashurbanipal in 663 (we know of no later overthrow), and Nineveh fell about 607. Nahum flourished, then, somewhere between 663 and 607.² Some critics, feeling in his description of the fall of Thebes the force of a recent impression, have placed his prophesying immediately after that, or about 660.³ But this is too far away from the fall of Nineveh. In 660 the power of Assyria was unthreatened. Nor is 652, the year of the revolt of Babylon, Egypt and the princes of Palestine, a more likely date.⁴ For although in that year Assyrian supremacy ebbed from Egypt never to return, Ashurbanipal quickly reduced Elam, Babylon and all Syria. Nahum, on the other hand, represents the centre of the empire as threatened.

¹iii. 8-10.

²The description of the fall of No-Amon precludes the older view almost universally held before the discovery of Ashurbanipal's destruction of Thebes, *viz.*, that Nahum prophesied in the days of Hezekiah or in the earlier years of Manasseh (Lightfoot, Pusey, Nägelsbach, etc.).

³So Schrader, Volck in Herzog *Real-Enc.*, and others.

⁴It is favoured by Winckler, *A.T. Untersuch.*, pp. 127 f.

The land of Assyria is already invaded (iii 13, etc.). Nineveh, if not invested, must immediately be so, and that by forces too great for resistance. Her mixed populace show signs of breaking up. Within, as without, her doom is sealed. All this implies not only the advance of an enormous force upon Nineveh, but the reduction of her people to hopelessness. Now, as we have seen,¹ Assyria proper was thrice overrun. The Scythians poured across her about 626, but there is no proof that they threatened Nineveh.² A little after Ashurbanipal's death in 625, the Medes under King Phraortes invaded Assyria, but Phraortes was slain and his son Kyaxares called away by an invasion of his own country. Herodotus says that this was after he had defeated the Assyrians in a battle and had begun the siege of Nineveh,³ but before he had succeeded in reducing the city. After a time he subdued or assimilated the Medes, and then investing Nineveh once more, about 608, in two years he took and destroyed her.

To which of these two sieges by Kyaxares are we to assign the Book of Nahum? Hitzig, Kuenen, Budde and others incline to the first on the ground that Nahum speaks of the yoke of Assyria as still heavy on Judah, though about to be lifted. They argue that by 608, when King Josiah had already felt himself free enough to extend his reforms into Northern Israel, and dared to dispute Necho's passage across Esdraelon, the Jews must have been conscious that they had nothing more to fear from Assyria, and Nahum could hardly have written as he does in i. 13, *I will break his yoke*

¹ Above, pp. 15 f., 18 ff.

² This in answer to Jeremias in Delitzsch's and Haupt's *Beiträge zur Assyriologie*, III, 96.

³ I, 103.

*from off thee and burst thy bonds in sunder.*¹ But this is not conclusive, for *first*, as we have seen, it is uncertain that i. 13 is from Nahum himself, and *second*, if it be from himself, he might as well have written it about 608 as about 625, for he speaks not from the feelings of any single year, but with the impression upon him of the whole epoch of Assyrian servitude then drawing to a close. The eve of the later siege as a date for the book is, as Davidson remarks,² 'well within the verge of possibility,' and some critics prefer it because in their opinion Nahum's descriptions thereby acquire greater reality and naturalness. But this is not convincing, for if Kyaxares actually began the siege of Nineveh about 625, Nahum's sense of the imminence of her fall is perfectly natural. Wellhausen indeed denies that earlier siege. 'Apart from Herodotus,' he says, 'it would never have occurred to anybody to doubt that Nahum's prophecy coincided with the fall of Nineveh.'³ This is true, for it is to Herodotus alone that we owe the tradition of the earlier siege. But what if we believe Herodotus? In that case, it is impossible to come to a decision as between the two sieges. The prophecy of Nahum suits either equally well,⁴ but the later is the more probable.

¹ Hitzig's other reason, that the besiegers of Nineveh are described by Nahum in ii. 3 ff. as single, which was true of the siege in 625 c., but not of that of 608-606, when the Chaldeans joined the Medes, is disposed of by the proof on pp. 22 f. above, that even in 608-606 the Medes carried on the siege alone.

² Page 17.

³ On ch. i. 9.

⁴ The phrase often appealed to by both sides, i. 9, *Yahweh maketh a complete end, not twice shall trouble arise*, is inconclusive. Hitzig maintains that if Nahum had written this after the first and before the second siege he would have had to say, 'not thrice *shall trouble arise*.' This is not conclusive: the prophet looks at the future and thinks of it—*not twice again shall trouble arise*; and if there were two sieges of Nineveh, would the words *not twice* have been suffered to remain, if they had been a confident prediction *before* the first siege? Besides, the meaning of

Fortunately it is not necessary to come to a decision. Nahum, we cannot too often insist, expresses the feelings neither of this nor of that decade in the reign of Josiah, but the volume of hope, wrath and passion of vengeance which had been gathering for more than a century and at last broke into exultation when it became certain that Nineveh was falling. That suits the eve of either siege by Kyaxares. Till we learn more about the first siege and how far it proceeded towards success, perhaps we ought to prefer the second. And of course those who feel that Nahum writes not in the future but the present tense of the details of Nineveh's overthrow, must prefer the second.

That the form as the spirit of the Book of Nahum is poetical is proved by the marks of poetic measure—unusual syntax, frequent absence of the article and particles, presence of elliptic forms and archaic and sonorous ones. In the two chapters on the siege of Nineveh the lines are short and quick, in harmony with the action they echo.

As we have seen, the text of ch. i is uncertain. The subject of the other two chapters involves the use of some technical and foreign terms, of the meaning of most of which we are ignorant.¹ There are some glosses; here and there the text is disordered. We get the usual help, and find the usual faults, in the Septuagint; these will be noticed in the course of the translation.

the phrase is not certain; it may be a general statement corresponding to what seems a general statement in the first clause. Kuenen and others refer the *trouble* not to that which is about to afflict Assyria, but to the long slavery and slaughter which Judah suffered at Assyria's hands. Davidson leaves it ambiguous.

¹ Technical military terms: ii. 2, מצורה; 4, פלדת (?); 4, הרעלו; 6, הסבך; iii. 3, מעלה (?). Probably foreign terms: ii. 8, הצב; iii. 17, מנזריך. Certainly foreign: iii. 17, מפסריך.

CHAPTER VII

THE VENGEANCE OF THE LORD

NAHUM I

THE prophet Nahum, as we have seen,¹ arose probably in Judah, if not about the same time as Zephaniah and Jeremiah, then a few years later. Whether he prophesied before or after the great Reform of 621 we cannot decide. His book does not reflect the inner history, character or merits of his generation. His interest is the fate of Nineveh. Zephaniah had also doomed the Assyrian capital, yet he was more concerned with Israel's unworthiness of the opportunity presented to them. The yoke of Ashur, he saw, was to be broken, but the cloud which was bursting from the north upon Nineveh must overwhelm the incorrigible people of Yahweh. For this Nahum has no thought. His heart, for all its bigness, holds room only for the bitter memories, the baffled hopes, the unappeased hatreds of a hundred years. And that is why we need not be anxious to fix his date upon one or other of the phases of Israel's history during that last quarter of the seventh century. For he represents no single movement of his people's progress, but the passion of the whole epoch drawing to a close. Nahum's book is one great At Last !

And, therefore, while Nahum is a worse prophet

¹ Above, pp. 79 f., 85 ff.

than Zephaniah, with less conscience and insight, he is a greater poet, pouring forth the exultation of a people long enslaved, who see their tyrant ready for destruction. His language is strong and brilliant; his rhythm rumbles and rolls, leaps and flashes, like the horse and chariots he describes. It is a pity the text is corrupt. If the original lay before us, and that knowledge of the times which the excavation of ancient Assyria may still yield, we might judge Nahum to be an even greater poet than we do.

We have seen that there are reasons for doubting whether he wrote the first chapter of the book,¹ but no one questions its fitness as an introduction to the exultation over Nineveh's fall in chs. ii and iii. The chapter is theological, affirming general principles of Divine Providence, by which the overthrow of the tyrant is certain and God's people are assured of deliverance. Let us place ourselves among the people, who for so long had been thwarted, crushed and demoralised by the most brutal empire which was ever suffered to roll its force across the world, and we shall sympathise with the author, who for the moment will feel nothing about his God, save that He is a God of vengeance. Like the grief of a bereaved man, the vengeance of an enslaved people has hours sacred to itself. And this people had such a God! Yahweh must punish the tyrant, else were He untrue. He had been patient, and patient, as a verse seems to hint,² just because He was omnipotent, but in the end He must rise to judgement. He was God of heaven and earth, and it is the old physical proofs of His power, so often appealed to by the peoples of the East, for they feel them as we cannot, which this hymn calls up as

¹ See above, pp. 84 f.

² Ver. 3, if the reading be correct.

Yahweh sweeps to the overthrow of the oppressor. *Before such power of wrath who may stand? What think ye of Yahweh?* The God who works with such ruthless, absolute force in nature will not relax in the fate He is preparing for Nineveh. *He is one who maketh utter destruction*, not needing to raise His forces a second time, and as stubble before fire His foes go down before Him. No half-measures are His, Whose are the storm, drought and earthquake.

Such is the religion of the Proem to the Book of Nahum—thoroughly Oriental in its sense of God's method and resources of destruction; Jewish, and natural both to that and other ages of Jewish history, in the bursting of its pent hopes of revenge. We of the West might express these hopes differently. We should not attribute so much passion to the Avenger. With our keener sense of law, we should emphasise the slowness of the process, and select for its illustration the forces of decay rather than those of sudden ruin. But we must remember the crashing times in which the Jews lived. The world was breaking up. The elements were loose, and all that God's people could hope was the bursting of their yoke, with shelter in the day of trouble. The elements were loose, but amidst the crash the little people knew that Yahweh knew them.

- i. 2. *A jealous God is Yahweh,
Avenger and Lord of wrath.¹
Avenger is Yahweh to His adversaries,
And implacable He to His foes.²*

¹ This couplet, beginning with the letter *aleph*, is rendered above according to the LXX, and the rhythm. To the first line Heb. adds the redundant *and avenging*, and to the second *Yahweh*.

² This couplet some remove to after ver. 9, as it begins with the letter *nun*. *Implacable*, lit. *preserving*, i.e., His anger.

- i. 3. *Patient is Yahweh and great in power (?)¹
Yet wholly He never absolveth.*

*In² whirlwind and storm is His way,
And clouds are the dust of His feet.*

4. *He curbeth³ the sea and drieth it up,
The rivers all hath he parched.*

*Withered⁴ are Bashan and Carmel,
The bloom of Lebānon is withered.*

5. *The mountains⁵ have trembled at Him,
The hills are dissolved.*

*And⁶ earth is laid waste before Him,
The world and all her dwellers.*

6. *In face of His raging⁷ who may stand,
Or who rise up in the heat of His anger?
His fury⁸ pours forth like the fire,
And the rocks are rent before Him.*

7. *Good⁹ is Yahweh to those who await Him,¹⁰
In the day of distress for a stronghold,
And He knoweth them who trust Him.*

8. *With an overwhelming flood
Full end of His rebels He maketh,
And with darkness cometh down¹¹ on His foes.*

¹ After Gunkel some read *mercy* or *leal love* for *power*; and some take the couplet after 8a.

² This couplet begins with the letter *beth*.

³ This couplet begins with the third letter *gimel*.

⁴ Heb. אָמַל, but other readings have been suggested in order to begin this couplet with the fourth letter *daleth*.

⁵ This couplet begins with the fifth letter *he*.

⁶ This with a *vau*.

⁷ Bringing this word forward some begin the couplet with a *zain*.

⁸ This couplet begins with a *heth*.

⁹ And this with *teth*.

¹⁰ So LXX. Heb. = *for a stronghold in the day of trouble*.

¹¹ *Thrusts into*, Wellhausen, reading יִרְדֵּף or יִרְדֵּף for יִרְדֵּף

9. *What¹ may ye devise against Yahweh,
He who a full end maketh?
Not² twice hath He to ~~avenge~~ Him³ on His foes.⁴*
10. . . . *tangled thorns though ever so sodden,
Consumed shall they be like dried-up stubble.⁵*

With ver. 10 the traces of acrostic cease, and we pass to a series of verses obviously (as recent critics agree) out of order : i. 12, 13, 15 along with ii. 2,⁶ together a promise of deliverance to Judah ; while i. 11, 14 with ii. 1, 3-13⁷ are the announcement of Nineveh's doom. The latter we take in our next chapter. Herewith follows the former ; note the appearance in it of the elegiac measure.

12. *Thus sayeth Yahweh :
Though ever so full the great waters⁸*

¹ This line commences with *mem*.

² This with *lamed*.

³ So LXX, reading יָקוּם for the תָּקוּם of the text.

⁴ For צָרָה, *trouble*, read צָרֵי, *His foes*.

⁵ All the text of this couplet is difficult if not impossible. It opens with two words *for till* ; *tangled and thorns* both begin with the letter *samekh*, so do the next two words which with R.V. may be rendered *drenched as with their drink*. Various emendations have been conjectured. The above rendering is after Arnold. The verse concludes with a word that unduly lengthens the rhythm, מְלֵא, *fully*, which Wellhausen and others emend to הֲלֵא, *is it not ?* and transfer to the beginning of ver. 11.

⁶ In Heb. i. 12, 13, with ii. 1, 3.

⁷ In Heb. i. 11, 14, with ii. 2, 4-14.

⁸ Doubtful text ; R.V. renders Heb. exactly *though they be in full strength and likewise many*. But LXX has, *Thus saith the Lord ruling over many waters* (omitting the first וְכֵן) ; similarly Syr. : *Thus saith Yahweh of the heads of many waters*. With Wellhausen I follow these hints in the above translation. For עֲבַר in next line read עֲבָרָה with LXX taking ך from the next verb. But Marti and J. M. P. Smith alter the reading to *the days of my contention are completed, over and gone*.

- i. 12. *Shall be cut and pass off,
Thee have I humbled,
Will not humble thee more.*
13. *Now I will break his yoke from upon thee
And thy bonds burst asunder.*
15. *Lo, on the mountains the feet of a herald
Publishing peace!
Keep, O Judah, thy feasts,
Fulfil thy vows.
No more is the man of ruin ¹ to cross thee,
He is wholly cut off.*
- ii. 2. *For Yahweh restores the vine ² of Jacob.
Like the vine of Israel,
For the plunderers had plundered them
And their branches destroyed.*

¹ Heb. *Beli'yaal*, in English, *Belial*.

² So plausibly many moderns reading for *גִּאֲוֹן*, *pride or excellency* so Heb., LXX, A. B. Davidson, etc.), *גִּפְּן*, *vine*, because of *their* *ranches* in the last line.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SIEGE AND FALL OF NINEVEH

NAHUM I. 11, 14; II. 1, 3-13; III

THE scene changes from the presence and awful arsenal of the Almighty to the historical consummation of His vengeance. Nahum foresees the siege of Nineveh. Probably the Medes have already overrun Assyria.¹ The *Old Lion* has withdrawn to his den, and is making his last stand. The suburbs are full of the enemy, and the walls which made the inner city one vast fortress are invested. Nahum describes the details of the assault. Let us try, before we follow him, to form some picture of Assyria and her capital at this time.²

¹ See above, pp. 19 ff.

² The authorities are full. First is M. Botta's huge work *Monument de Ninive*, Paris, 5 vols., 1845. Then comes the work of which we made use in describing Babylon in *Isaiah xl-lxvi*: 'Memoirs by Commander James Felix Jones, I.N.' in *Selections from the Records of the Bombay Government*, No. XLIII, New Series, 1857. It is good to find that the careful observations of Commander Jones, too much neglected in his own country, have justice done them by Colonel Billerbeck in the work about to be cited. Then there are the invaluable *Nineveh and its Remains*, by Layard, and the works of Rawlinson and George Smith. Colonel Billerbeck, founding on these and other works, has published an admirable monograph (illustrated by maps and pictures), not only on the military state of Assyria proper and of Nineveh, but on the whole subject of Assyrian fortification and art of besieging, as well as on the Median invasions. It forms the larger part of an article to which Dr. Jeremias

As we have seen,¹ the Assyrian Empire began about 625 to shrink to the limits of Assyria proper, or Upper Mesopotamia, within the Euphrates on the south-west, the range of Kurdistan on the north-east, the river Chabor on the north-west and the Lesser Zab on the south-east.² This is a territory of nearly a hundred and fifty miles from north to south, and rather more than two hundred and fifty from east to west. To the south the Viceroy of Babylon, Nabopolassar, held practically independent sway over Lower Mesopotamia, if he did not command as well a large part of the Upper Euphrates Valley. On the north the Medes were urgent, holding at least the farther ends of the passes through the Kurdish mountains, if they had not already penetrated these to their southern issues.

The kernel of the Assyrian territory was the triangle, two of whose sides are represented by the Tigris and the Greater Zab, the third by the foot of the Kurdistan mountains. It is a fertile plain, with some low hills. To-day the level parts are covered by a large number of villages and cultivated fields. The more frequent mounds of ruin attest in ancient times a still greater population. At the period of which we are treating, the plains must have been covered by an almost continuous series of towns. At either end lay a group of fortresses. The southern was the ancient capital of Assyria, Kalchu (or Kelach), now Nimrud, about six miles north of the confluence of the Greater Zab and

contributes an introduction, and reconstruction with notes on chs. ii, iii of Nahum: 'Der Untergang Niniveh's und die Weissagungsschrift des Nahum von Elkosh,' in Vol. III of *Beiträge zur Assyriologie und Semitischen Sprachwissenschaft*, edited by Friedrich Delitzsch and Haupt, with the support of Johns Hopkins University: Leipzig, 1895.

¹ Pages 20 f.

² Colonel Billerbeck (p. 115) thinks that the south-east frontier at this time lay more to the north, near the Greater Zab.

the Tigris. The northern, close by the present town of Khorsabad, was the great fortress and palace of Sargon, Dur-Sargina :¹ it covered the roads upon Nineveh from the north, and standing upon the upper reaches of the Choser (or Khusur) protected the city's water supply. But besides these there were scattered upon the main roads and round the frontiers of the territory other forts, towers and posts, the ruins of many of which are still considerable, but others have perished without leaving any traces. The roads thus protected drew in upon Nineveh from all directions. The chief of those, along which the Medes and their allies would advance from the east and north, crossed the Greater Zab, or came down through the Kurdistan mountains upon the citadel of Sargon. Two of them were distant enough from the latter to relieve the invaders from the necessity of taking it, and Kalchu lay far to the south of all of them. The brunt of the first defence of the land would therefore fall upon the smaller fortresses.

Nineveh itself lay upon the Tigris between Kalchu and Sargon's city, just where the Tigris is met by the Khusur. Low hills descend from the north upon the site of the fortress, and then curve east and south, bow-shaped, to draw west again upon the Tigris at the south end of the city. To the east of the latter they leave a level plain, some two and a half miles by one and a half. These hills appear to have been covered by several forts. The city itself was four-sided, lying lengthwise to the Tigris and cut across its breadth by the Khusur. The circumference was about seven and a half miles, enclosing the largest fortified space in Western Asia, and capable of a population of

¹ First excavated by M. Botta, 1842-1845. See also George Smith, *Assyr. Disc.*, pp. 98 f.

three hundred thousand. The western wall, rather over two and a half miles long, touched the Tigris at either end, but between lay a broad, bow-shaped stretch of land, probably then, as now, free of buildings. The north-western wall ran up from the Tigris for a mile and a quarter to the low ridge which entered the city at its northern corner. From this the eastern wall, with a curve, ran down in face of the eastern plain for a little more than three miles, and was joined to the western by the short southern wall of not quite half a mile. The ruins of the western wall stand from ten to twenty, those of the others from twenty-five to sixty, feet above the natural surface, with here and there the higher remains of towers. There were several gates, of which the chief were one in the northern and two in the eastern wall. Round all the walls except the western ran moats about a hundred and fifty feet broad—not close to the foot of the walls, but at a distance of some sixty feet. Water was supplied by the Khusur to all the moats south of it; those to the north were fed from a canal which entered the city near its northern corner. At these and other points one can still trace remains of huge dams, batardeaux and sluices; and the moats might be emptied by opening at either end of the western wall other dams, which kept back the waters from the bed of the Tigris. Beyond its moat, the eastern wall was protected north of the Khusur by a large outwork covering its gate, and south of the Khusur by another outwork, in shape the segment of a circle, and consisting of a double line of fortification more than five hundred yards long, of which the inner wall was almost as high as the great wall itself, but the outer considerably lower. Again, in front of this and in face of the eastern plain was a third line of fortification, consisting of a low inner wall

and a colossal outer wall still rising to a height of fifty feet, with a moat one hundred and fifty feet broad between them. On the south this third line was closed by a large fortress.

Upon the trebly fortified city the Medes drew in from east and north, far from Kalchu and able to avoid even Dur-Sargina. The other fortresses on the frontier and the approaches fell to them, says Nahum, like *ripe fruit*.¹ He cries to Nineveh to prepare for the siege.² Military authorities³ suppose that the Medes directed their main attack upon the northern corner of the city. Here they would be upon a level with its highest point, and command the waterworks by which most of the moats were fed. Their flank, too, would be protected by the ravines of the Khusur. Nahum describes fighting in the suburbs before the assault of the walls, and it was just here, according to some,⁴ that the famous suburbs of Nineveh lay, out on the canal and the road to Khorsabad. All the open fighting which Nahum foresees would take place in these *outplaces* and *broad streets*⁵—the mustering of the *red* ranks,⁶ the *prancing horses*⁷ and *rattling chariots*⁸ and *cavalry at the charge*.⁹ Beaten there the Assyrians would retire to the great walls, and the waterworks fall into the hands of the besiegers. They would not immediately destroy these, but in order to bring their engines and battering-rams against the walls they would have to lay strong dams across the moats; the eastern moat has actually been found filled with rubbish in face of a great breach at the north end of its wall. This breach may have been

¹ iii. 12.

² iii. 14.

³ See Jones and Billerbeck.

⁴ Delitzsch places the עיר רחבות of Gen. x. 11, the 'ribit Nina' of the inscriptions, on the north-east of Nineveh.

⁵ ii. 4 Eng., 5 Heb.

⁶ ii. 3 Eng., 4 Heb.

⁷ *Ibid.* LXX.

⁸ iii. 2.

⁹ iii. 3.

effected not only by the rams but by directing upon the wall the waters of the canal; or farther south the Khusur itself, in its spring floods, may have been confined by the besiegers and swept in upon the sluices which regulated its passage through the eastern wall into the city. To this means tradition has assigned the capture of Nineveh,¹ and Nahum perhaps foresees the possibility of it: *the gates of the rivers are opened, the palace is dissolved.*²

Now of all this possible progress of the siege Nahum, of course, does not give us a narrative, for he is writing upon the eve of it, and probably, as we have seen, in Judah, with only such knowledge of the position and strength of Nineveh as her fame had scattered across the world. The military details, the muster, the fighting in the open, the investment, the assault, he did not need to go to Assyria or to wait for the fall of Nineveh to describe as he has done. Assyria herself (and herein lies the pathos of the poem) had made Western Asia familiar with their horrors for two centuries. As we learn from the prophets and still more from herself, Assyria was the great Besieger of Men. It is siege, siege, which Amos, Hosea and Isaiah tell their people they shall feel: *siege and blockade, and that right round the land!* It is siege, irresistible and full of cruelty, which Assyria records as her glory. Miles of sculpture are covered with troops marching upon some Syrian or Median fortress. Scaling ladders and enormous engines are pushed to the walls under cover of a shower of arrows. There are assaults and breaches, panic-stricken suppliant defenders. Streets and places

¹ It is the waters of the Tigris that the tradition avers to have broken the wall; but the Tigris itself runs in a bed too low for this; it can only have been the Khusur. See both Jones and Billerbeck.

² ii. 6.

are strewn with corpses, men are impaled, women led weeping, children dashed against the stones. Israel had felt these horrors for a hundred years, and it is out of their experience that Nahum weaves his predictions. The Besieger of the world is at last besieged; every cruelty he has inflicted is now to be turned upon himself. Again and again does Nahum return to the vivid details,—he hears the whips crack beneath the walls, and the racket of the leaping chariots; the end is slaughter, dispersion and a dead waste.¹

Two points remain to be emphasised.

There is a striking absence of any reference to Israel.² Yahweh of Hosts is mentioned twice in the same formula,³ but otherwise the author does not obtrude his nationality. It is not in Judah's name he exults, but in that of all the peoples of Western Asia. Nineveh has sold *peoples* by her harlotries and *races* by her witchcraft; *peoples* shall gaze on her nakedness and *kingdoms* on her shame. Nahum gives voice to no national passions, but to the outraged conscience of mankind. We see another proof, not only of the large,

¹ If the above conception of chs. ii and iii be correct, there is no need for such a rearrangement of these verses as is proposed by Jeremias and Billerbeck. In order to produce a continuous narrative of the siege, they bring forward iii. 12-15 (describing the fall of the fortresses and gates of the land and the call to the defence of the city), and place it immediately after ii. 2, 4 (the description of the invader) and ii. 5-11 (the appearance of chariots in the suburbs, the opening of the floodgates, the flight and spoiling of the city). But if they believe that the original gave an orderly account of the siege, why do they not bring forward also iii. 2 f., which describe the arrival of the foe under the walls? The truth appears to be as stated above. We have two poems against Nineveh, ch. ii and ch. iii. They do not give an orderly description of the siege, but exult over Nineveh's imminent downfall, with scattered gleams of how this is to happen. Of these 'impressions' of the coming siege there are three, and in the order in which we have them they occur naturally: ii. 5 ff., iii. 2 f., and iii. 12 ff.

² ii. 2 goes with the previous chapter. See above, p. 93.

³ ii. 13, iii. 5, *Rede of Yahweh of Hosts*.

human heart of prophecy, but of that which in the introduction to these Twelve Prophets we ventured to assign as one of its causes. By crushing all peoples to a common level of despair, by the universal pity which her cruelties excited, Assyria contributed to the development in Israel of the idea of a common humanity.¹

The other thing to be noticed is Nahum's feeling of the incoherence and mercenariness of the population of Nineveh. Her command of the world had turned her into a great trading power. Under Ashurbanipal the lines of ancient commerce had been diverted to pass through her. The immediate result was an enormous increase of population, such as the world had not seen within one city. But this had come out of all races and was held together by the greed of gain. What had been a firm and vigorous nation of warriors, irresistible in their impact upon the world, was now a loose aggregate of many peoples, without patriotism, discipline or sense of honour. Nahum likens it to a reservoir of waters,² which as soon as it is breached must scatter, and leave the city bare. The Second Isaiah said the same of Babylon, to which the bulk of Nineveh's mercenary populace must have fled :—

*Thus are they grown to thee, they who did weary thee,
Traders of thine from thy youth ;
Each as he could escape have they fled ;
None is thy helper.³*

The prophets saw the truth about both cities. Their vastness and splendour were artificial. Neither of them, and Nineveh less than Babylon, was a natural centre for the world's commerce. When their political

¹ See above, Vol. I, Ch. IV, especially pp. 51 f.

² ii. 8.

³ *Isaiah xl-lxvi*, p. 213.

power fell, the lines of trade, which had been twisted to their feet, drew back to more natural courses, and Nineveh in especial became deserted. This is the explanation of the collapse of that mighty city. Nahum's foresight, and the metaphor in which he expressed it, were thoroughly sound. The population vanished like water. The site bears little trace of disturbance since the ruin by the Medes, except such as has been inflicted by the weather and the wandering tribes around. Mosul, Nineveh's representative to-day, is not built upon it, and is but a provincial town. The district was never meant for anything else.

The swift decay of these ancient empires is often employed as a warning to ourselves. But the parallel, as previous paragraphs suggest, is far from exact. If we lay aside for the moment the greatest difference of all, in religion and morals, there remain others almost of cardinal importance. Assyria and Babylonia were not filled, like Great Britain, with reproductive races, able to colonise distant lands, and carry abroad the spirit which had made them strong at home. Still more, they did not continue at home to be homogeneous. Their native forces were exhausted by long and unceasing wars. Their populations, especially in their capitals, were largely alien and distraught, with nothing to hold them together save their commercial interests. They were bound to break up at the first disaster. It is true that we are not without some risk of their peril. Some have observed with misgiving the proportion of foreigners in that department of our life from which the strength of our defence is largely drawn—our merchant navy. But such a fact is far from bringing our empire and its chief cities into the fatal condition of Nineveh and Babylon. If we be true to our ideals of righteousness and religion, if our patriotism continue

moral and sincere, we shall have power to absorb the foreign elements that throng to us in commerce, and stamp them with our own spirit.

We are now ready to follow Nahum's two poems on the approaching fall of Nineveh. In previous editions I have said that the first of them had lost its original opening ; but with recent critics ¹ I am now persuaded that this opening is to be found in i. 11, 14, which should be prefixed to ii. 1, 3-13.² The *plotter* of i. 11 is, of course, Sennacherib. The poem proceeds in four-line stanzas, the lines being mostly of three beats each, but sometimes of two.

- i. 11. *Out³ of thee came the plotter
Of evil on Yahweh,
Counselling ruin,⁴*

14. *So on thee Yahweh ordained :—*

*No more of thy name shall be sown (?)⁵
From the house of thy God I will cut
Carven and molten image,
And make thy grave a disgrace.⁶*

- ii. 1. *The Hammer⁷ is up to thy face,
Hold thou the rampart !*

¹ Wellhausen, Kautzsch, Marti, J. M. P. Smith, Gordon, Moffatt.

² In the English order but Heb. ii. 2, 4-14.

³ Some read the line as a question : *Did there not come, etc.* ; see above the note to i. 10.

⁴ Again *Beli'yaal* ; see i. 15 (Heb. ii. 1).

⁵ So Heb. יִזְכֵּר, awkward after name ; so some read יִזְכָּר, *be remembered*.

⁶ Heb. כִּי קָלוֹת, *for thou art vile, or lightly esteemed* ; read instead קָלוֹת and delete כִּי as dittography after the preceding letter ; so Wellhausen, Marti, etc., but Bickell suggests the Aram. קִקְלוֹת, *dungheaps*.

⁷ Or *war-club*, reading מַסֵּבִין with Michaelis and Wellhausen (cf. Siegfried-Stade's *Wörterbuch*, sub פִּיץ) for מַפְיֵץ, *Breaker in pieces*.

In Jer. li. 20 Babylon is also called by Yahweh His מַסֵּבִין, *Hammer or*

*Look up the road, brace the loins,¹
Pull thyself firmly together.²*

3. *The shields³ of his heroes are reddened,
The men of the host are in scarlet.⁴
Like⁵ fire are the . . .⁶ of the chariots,
[In the day of his muster] ;⁷ and the horses⁸
are prancing.*

4. *The chariots rage through the outskirts,⁹
They tear through the suburbs ;¹⁰
Their look is like torches,
Like lightnings they dart.¹¹*

¹ This may be a call to attention, the converse of 'Stand at ease!'

² Heb. *brace up thy power exceedingly*.

³ Heb. singular but collective.

⁴ Rev. ix. 17. Purple or red was the favourite colour of the Medes. The Assyrians also loved red. 'The redness of the shields,' says J. M. P. Smith, was possibly 'due to the reflection of the sunshine from the reddish copper surface of the shields (1 Macc. vi. 39 ; Jos. *Ant.* xiii. 12, § 5).'

⁵ Read כֶּאֱשׁ for בֶּאֱשׁ.

⁶ פִּלְדוֹת, the word omitted, is doubtful ; it does not occur elsewhere. LXX, ἡνίαι ; Vulg. *habenæ*. Some think *scythes*—cf. the Arabic *falad*, 'to cut'—but the earliest notice of chariots armed thus is at the battle of Cunaxa, and in Jewish literature they do not appear before 2 Macc. xiii. 2. Cf. Jeremias, *op. cit.*, p. 97, where Billerbeck suggests that the words are applicable to the covered siege-engines, pictured on the Assyrian monuments, from which the besiegers flung torches on the walls : cf. *ibid.*, p. 167, n.***. But from the parallelism of the verse it is more probable that ordinary chariots are meant. The leading chariots were covered with plates of metal (Billerbeck, p. 167). With Syr. many read לִפְיֹדוֹת, *lamps* or *torches*.

⁷ Unduly lengthening the line this may be a gloss.

⁸ So LXX reading פִּרְשִׁים פִּרְשִׁים of Heb. text, that means *cypresses*. If the latter be correct, we would need to suppose with Billerbeck that either the long lances of the Aryan Medes were meant, or the heavy spears thrust against the walls by engines. We are not, however, among these yet ; it appears to be the cavalry and chariots in the open that are described.

⁹ Heb. חוּצוֹת, here not *streets* but *outplaces*.

¹⁰ Or *broad places*. See above, p. 99.

¹¹ See above, n. 6.

- ii. 5. *He musters* ¹ *his nobles*

*They rush to the wall
And the mantlet* ³ *is fixed.*

6. *The gates* ⁴ *of the rivers are opened,
And the palace dissolves.* ⁵

7. . . . ⁶ *is stripped and carried away.
Her maidens moaning, beating their breasts.*

¹ יִזְכֹּר, *remembers* or *mentions*, but to be rendered here and in Job xiv. 13, *summons* or *musters*.

² Heb. *They stumble in their goings*. Davidson holds this is more probably of the defenders; but if so it comes in strangely between the preceding and following lines which describe the besiegers. Various emendations have been proposed. Duhm, *his nobles gallop straight in their courses*; and J. M. P. Smith, *they take command of their divisions* (?) reading יִמְשְׁלוּ for יִכְשְׁלוּ, and refers for the meaning *divisions* or *companies* to Job vi. 19.

³ הַמָּכֶה. Partic. of *to cover*, hence *covering thing*: whether *mantlet* (of the besiegers) or *bulwark* (of the besieged: cf. מִסָּדָה, Isa. xxii. 8). Billerbeck says, if it be defence, we can read ver. 5 as illustrating the vanity of the hurried defence, when the elements break in vv. 6 and 7 (p. 101: cf. p. 176, n.*).

⁴ *Sluices* (Jeremias) or *bridge-gates* (Wellhausen)?

⁵ Or *breaks into motion, i.e., flight*.

⁶ הַצִּב, if Hebrew, might be Hophal of נָצַב and has been taken to mean *it is determined, she* (Nineveh) *is taken captive*. Volck (in Herzog), Kleinert, Orelli: *it is settled*. LXX, ὑπόστασις = מִצֵּב. Vulg. *miles* (as if some form of צָבָה?). Hitzig points it הַצִּב, *the lizard*, Wellhausen *the toad*. But this noun is masculine (Lev. xi. 29) and the verbs feminine. Davidson suggests the other הַצִּב, fem., *litter* or *palanquin* (Isa. lxvi. 20): 'in lieu of anything better one might be tempted to think that the litter might mean the woman, just as in Arab. dhā'inah means a woman's litter and then a woman.' One is tempted to think of הַצִּבִּי, *the beauty*. The Targ. has מְלִכְתָּא, *the queen*. From as early as at least 1527 (*Latina Interpretatio*, Xantis Pagnini Lucensis, revised and edited for the Plantin Bible, 1615) the word has been taken by a series of scholars as a proper name, Hussab So Ewald and others. It may be an Assyrian word, like others in Nahum. Perhaps, again, the text is corrupt.

8. *Nineveh is like to a pool,
With her waters escaping.¹
'Stand, stand!' they cry,²
But none turns back.*
9. *'Plunder the silver, plunder the gold!
No end to the stores!
Take you² a load
Of all sorts of jewels!'*
10. *Vacant and void and waste³ is she,
Melting of hearts and knocking of knees,
And anguish thorough all loins,
The faces of all gather black fear.⁴*
11. *Where is the lair of the lions,
Or the young lions' cave,⁵
Whither the lion was wont to retire.⁶
The whelps of the lion with none to affray!*

Paul Ruben (*Academy*, March 7, 1896) proposed instead of העלתה, *is carried away*, to read העתלה, and to translate it by analogy of the Assyrian 'etellu,' fem. 'etellitu' = great or exalted, *The Lady*. The line would then run *Huṣṣab, the lady, is stripped*. (With העתלה Cheyne, *Academy*, June 21, 1896, compares עתליה, which, he suggests, is 'Yahweh is great' or 'is lord.') To *moaning* Heb. adds *like the sound of doves* which unduly lengthens the verse and seems a gloss.

¹ Heb. מִימֵי הָיָה for מִימֵי אֲשֶׁר הָיָה, *from days she was*. A.V. *is of old*. R.V. *hath been of old*, and Marg. *from the days that she hath been*. LXX, *her waters*, מִימֵיהָ, as above. On waters fleeing, cf. Ps. civ. 7.

² These words (or similar) required by the rhythm are added by most moderns.

³ Buḫah, umēbuḫah, umēbullāḫah. Ewald: *desert and desolation and devastation*. The first two are nouns, the third a participle.

⁴ Literally: *and the faces of all them gather lividness*.

⁵ For מַרְעָה, *feeding-ground*, Wellhausen reads מַעְרָה, *cave or hold*.

⁶ LXX, reading לְבוֹא for לָבִיא.

- ii. 12. *The lion, who tore enough for his cubs
And for his lionesses strangled,
Filling his caves with prey,
And with rapine his lairs.*

13. *Lo, I am at thee—Rede of Yahweh of Hosts—¹
I put up thy lair in smoke,²
I cut off from the earth thy rapine,
And the voice of thine envoys is no more heard.*

THE SECOND ODE

In his second ode Nahum drives home her doom to Nineveh with even greater vigour than in his first. The lines are short, mostly of two beats each, but rhythmically varied by some of three and even of four. The effect suits the name which he gave to the coming destroyer of Nineveh, *The Hammer*, for the short lines beat like hammer-blows. It is a rare piece of rapid resonant verse ringing the City to her doom. The most of it, but not quite all, is divisible into four-lined stanzas. The *Ḳinah* measure which occasionally appears throughout is unmistakable in vv. 18 and 19.

- iii. 1. *Woe to the City of Blood,
All of her falsehood,
Filled up with plunder,
Rapine unending !*

2. *Hark to the whip,
Hark rumble of wheels,
Horses at gallop,
And racketing ³ chariots !*

¹ So Heb. and LXX, *Rede of Yahweh of Hosts* probably a gloss.

² Heb. adds *and thy cubs shall the sword devour*, perhaps another gloss.

³ So sounds the Heb. *mērakēdah*.

3. *Cavalry charging,¹*

*Flashing of sabres,
Lightning of lances,
A multitude slain,*

*A mass of corpses,
Endless dead bodies,
They stumble over the dead.*

4. *For the Harlot's manifold harlotries,
Beauteous, mistress of witchcraft,
Nations made drunk² with her whoredom,
And by her witchcraft races.*

5. *Lo, I am at thee—Rede of Yahweh of Hosts—³
And will strip thy skirts to thy face,
And show off to nations thy nakedness,
And to kingdoms thy shame.⁴*

6. *I will have thee pelted with filth,
Make a fool and a gazing-stock of thee,*

7. *Till every one who beholds thee,
Shall shrink from thee saying : ⁵*

*' Shattered is Nineveh,
Who will bemoan her ? '*

¹ Or *prancing* or *rearing* ; Heb. מַעֲלָה ; LXX, ἀναβαλνύσας.

² Reading with Budde, Marti, etc., הַמְשַׁכֶּרֶת for הַמְכַרֶּת. The *harlotry* was, of course, the idolatries and magic into which she seduced other nations, or which she imposed upon them.

³ This again may be a later addition.

⁴ Jeremias shows how the Assyrians did this to female captives. It was also the punishment deemed fit for harlots and adulteresses : Isa. xlvii. 3, Jer. xiii. 26, Ezek. xvi. 37 ff.

⁵ Heb. takes this word *and say* to open the next line.

iii. 7. *Where shall I seek for
Any to mourn ¹ her ? ²*

8. *Shalt thou do better than No-Amon,³
Enthroned on the Nile-streams,⁴
Her rampart the sea,⁵
And waters ⁶ her walls.*

9. *Kush was her strength,
Miṣraim unending,⁷
Phut and the Libyans
Were there to assist her.⁸*

10. *Even she was for exile.
She went to captivity ;
Even her infants were dashed
On every street corner.*

*Upon all ⁹ her honoured
They cast the lot,*

¹ Following Wildeboer, Kautzsch and others take this word, literally *comforters*, in the technical sense of *mourners* or *performers of the funeral rites*.

² So LXX; Heb. *thee*.

³ Jer. xlv. 25: *I will punish Amon at No.* Ezek. xxx. 14-16: . . . *judgments in No. . . . I will cut off No-Amon* (Heb. and A.V. *multitude of No*, reading הַמֶּוֹן; so also LXX, τὸ πλῆθος for אַמֹּן) . . . *and No shall be broken up*. It is Thebes, in Egyptian Nu-Amen. The god Amen had his temple there: Herod., I, 182, II, 42. Nahum refers to Ashurbanipal's account of the fall of Thebes. See above, p. 85.

⁴ הַיַּאֲרִים. Pl. of the word for Nile.

⁵ Heb. *waters around her*, which all recent critics take as a gloss and read הַיַּאֲרִים, *her rampart*. Arabs still call the Nile *the sea*.

⁶ So LXX, reading מַיִם for Heb. מִיָּם.

⁷ Haupt, J. M. P. Smith, etc., omit this line. Marti omits Miṣraim, but with Heb. joins *without end* to Phut.

⁸ So LXX; Heb. *thee*.

⁹ *All*, so LXX; Heb. omits.

*And all her great ones
Were fastened with fetters.*

II. *Thou too shalt stagger,¹
Thou become faint,
Thou too shalt seek for
Escape from the foe.*

12. *Thy fortresses all are figtrees,
The troops ² are ripe figs,
Be they shaken they drop
On the mouth of the eater.*

13 *Lo, thy troops ² are women within thee
Wide open fly to thy foes
The gates of thy land,
Fire has devoured thy bars.³*

14. *Draw thyself water for siege,
Strengthen thy forts.
Get into the mud, tread mortar,
Grip the brickmould.*

15. *There shall the fire consume thee,
Cut thee off shall the sword,⁴*

¹ Lit. *be drunken or drugged.*

² For Heb. עם, *with*, read עם, *people*, but in its military sense of *men*, i.e., *soldiers or troops, or garrison*; and so in 13 *thy people* (literally) has been rendered; cf. Jer. i. 37, ii. 30.

³ Needlessly transposed by some to before the first line of this stanza, by others to before the second.

⁴ Heb. and LXX add *devour thee like the locust*, probably a gloss; but Riedel emends to תכלך כילפה, cf. Assyr. Kallaptu, 'battle-axe.'

iii. 15. *Though thou make thee as many as locusts,
As many as locust swarms.*¹

16. *Multiply thou thy traffickers
More than the stars of the heavens*

17. *Thy . . .² as locust swarms,
And thy marshals as grasshoppers ;*

*They that hive in the hedges
When cold is the day,³
Risen the sun they are flown,
Unknown is their place.*

18. *Ah woe,⁴ thy rulers are sleeping,⁵
Thy nobles slumber.⁶*

¹ Heb. adds *the locusts break off and fly away* : cf. Jer. ix. 33. Some take it of the locusts stripping the skin which confines their wings : Davidson.

² מְנוֹרִיךְ. A.V. *thy crowned ones* ; but perhaps like its neighbour an Assyrian word, meaning we know not what. Haupt, *thine exorcists* ; J. M. P. Smith, *sacred officials* (?). Wellhausen reads מְמוֹרִיךְ, LXX, ὁ δὲ μιττωμένος σου (applied in Deut. xxiii. 3 and Zech. ix. 6 to the offspring of a mixed marriage between an Israelite and a Gentile), deine Mischlinge : a term of contempt for the floating foreign or semi-foreign population which filled Nineveh and was ready to fly at sight of danger. Similarly Wellhausen takes the second term, מְפַסֵּר. But this, which occurs also in Jer li. 27, appears to be some kind of official. In Assyrian *dupsar* is scribe, which may, like Heb. שֹׁמֵר, have been applied to any high official. See Schrader, *K.A.T.*, Eng. Tr., I, 141, II, 118 ; also Fried. Delitzsch, *Wo lag Parad.*, p. 142. The name and office were ancient. Such Babylonian officials are mentioned in the Tell el Amarna letters as present at the Egyptian court.

³ Heb. *day of cold*.

⁴ The last word of ver. 17 is אֲנִי for which read either אֲנִי as above or אֲנִי (Marti), after the LXX, ὁ αὐτοῖς ; or אֲנִי, *how* (Duhm and J. M. P. Smith). *Rulers*, lit. *shepherds*.

⁵ Heb. adds *O king of Assyria*, which most rightly take as a gloss.

⁶ Heb. ישכנו, *dwelt*, is the Heb. reading. But LXX, ἡσούμεν. Sleep must be taken in the sense of death : cf. Jer. li. 39, 57 ; Isa. xiv. 18.

*Thy troops are strewn on the hills
With no one to gather.*

19. *For thy wreck is no healing,¹
Fatal thy wound !
All hearing the bruit of thee
Clap their hands at thee.*

*For on whom has not passed
Unceasing thy cruelty ?²*

¹ For כְּהָרָה read גְּהָרָה, with LXX, *λαοίς*.

² This last couplet is taken as a gloss by Marti, Haupt, J. M. P. Smith, &c.

HABAKKUK

*Upon my watch-tower will I stand,
And take up my post on the rampart.
I will watch to see what He will say to me,
And what answer I get to my plea.*

.
The righteous shall live by his faithfulness.

° The beginning of speculation in Israel. °

CHAPTER IX

THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK

AS it has reached us, the Book of Habakkuk, under the title *The Oracle which Habakkuk the prophet received by vision*, consists of three chapters, which fall into three sections. *First*: ch. i. 2—ii. 4 (or 8), a piece in dramatic form; the prophet lifts his voice to God against the wrong and violence of which his whole horizon is full, and God sends him answer. *Second*: ch. ii. 5 (or 9)—20, a taunt-song in a series of Woes upon the wrong-doer. *Third*: ch. iii, part psalm, part prayer, descriptive of a Theophany and expressive of Israel's faith in their God. Of these three sections no one doubts the authenticity of the *first*; opinion is divided about the *second*; about the *third* there is a growing agreement that it is not a genuine work of Habakkuk, but a poem from a period after the Exile.

I. CHAP. I. 2—II. 4 (OR 8)

Yet it is the first piece which raises the most difficult questions. All¹ admit that it is to be dated somewhere along the line of Jeremiah's long career, *c.* 627—586. There is no doubt about the trend of the argument: a plaint to God on the sufferings of the righteous under

¹ Except one or two critics who place it in Manasseh's reign. See below.

tyranny, with God's answer. But the order and connection of the paragraphs of the argument are not clear. There is also difference of opinion as to who the tyrant is—native, Assyrian, or Chaldee; and this leads to a difference, of course, about the date, which ranges from the early years of Josiah to the end of Jehoiakim's reign, or from about 630 to 597.

As the verses lie, their argument is this: In ch. i. 2-4 Habakkuk asks the Lord how long the wicked are to oppress the righteous, to the paralysing of the Torah, or Revelation of His Law, and the making futile of judgement. For answer the Lord tells him, vv. 5-11, to look round among the heathen: He is about to raise up the Chaldees to do His work, a people swift, self-reliant, irresistible. Upon which Habakkuk resumes his question, vv. 12-17, how long will God suffer a tyrant who sweeps up the peoples into his net like fish? Is he to go on with this for ever? In ii. 1 Habakkuk prepares for an answer, which comes in ii. 2, 3, 4: let the prophet wait for the vision though it tarries; the proud oppressor cannot last, but the righteous shall live by his constancy, or faithfulness.

The difficulties are these. Who are the wicked oppressors in ch. i. 2-4? Are they Jews, or some heathen nation? And what is the connection between vv. 1-4 and vv. 5-11? Are the Chaldees, who are described in the latter, raised up to punish the tyrant complained against in the former? To these questions three different sets of answers have been given.

First: the great majority of critics take the wrong complained of in vv. 2-4 to be wrong done by unjust and cruel Jews to their countrymen, that is, civic disorder and violence, and believe that in vv. 5-11 Yahweh is represented as raising up the Chaldees to punish the sin of Judah—a message much the same as

Jeremiah's. But Habakkuk goes further : the Chaldees themselves with their cruelties aggravate his problem, how God can suffer wrong, and he appeals again to God, vv. 12-17. Are the Chaldees to be allowed to devastate for ever? The answer is given, as above, in ch. ii. 1-4. Such is practically the view of Pusey, Delitzsch, Kleinert, Kuenen, Sinker,¹ Driver, Orelli, Kirkpatrick, Wildeboer and Davidson, a formidable league, and Davidson says 'this is the most natural sense of the verses and of the words used in them.' But these scholars differ as to the date. Pusey, Delitzsch and Volck take the whole passage from i. 5 as prediction, and date it from before the rise of the Chaldee power in 625, attributing the internal wrongs of Judah described in vv. 2-4 to Manasseh's reign or the early years of Josiah.² But the rest, on the grounds that the prophet shows some experience of the Chaldean methods of warfare, and that the account of the internal disorder in Judah does not suit Josiah's reign, bring the passage down to the reign of Jehoiakim, 608-598, or of Jehoiachin, 597. Kleinert and Von Orelli date it before the battle of Carchemish, (506) in which the Chaldean Nebuchadrezzar wrested from Egypt the Empire of Western Asia, on the ground that after that Habakkuk could not have called a Chaldean

¹ See next note.

² So Pusey. Delitzsch in his commentary on Habakkuk, 1843, preferred Josiah's reign, but in his *O.T. Hist. of Redemption*, 1881, p. 226, Manasseh's. Volck (in Herzog, *Real-Encyc.*², art. 'Habakkuk,' 1879), assuming that Habakkuk is quoted both by Zephaniah (see above, p. 39, n.) and Jeremiah, places him before these. Sinker (*The Psalm of Habakkuk* : see below, p. 129, n. 2) deems 'the prophecy, taken as a whole,' to bring 'before us the threat of the Chaldean invasion, the horrors that follow in its train,' etc., with a vision of the day 'when the Chaldean host itself, its work done, falls beneath a mightier foe.' He fixes the date either in the concluding years of Manasseh's reign, or the opening years of that of Josiah (Preface. 1-4).

invasion of Judah incredible (i. 5). But Kuenen, Driver, Kirkpatrick, Wildeboer and Davidson date it after Carchemish. To Driver it must be immediately after, and before Judah became alarmed at the consequences to herself. To Davidson the description of the Chaldeans 'is scarcely conceivable before the battle,' 'hardly one would think before the deportation of the people under Jehoiachin.'¹ This also is Kuenen's view, who thinks that Judah must have suffered at least the first Chaldean raids, and he explains the use of an undoubted future in ch. i. 5, *Lo, I am about to raise up the Chaldeans*, as due to the prophet's predilection for a dramatic style. 'He sets himself in the past, and represents the already experienced chastisement [of Judah] as having been then announced by Yahweh. His contemporaries could not have mistaken his meaning.'

Second: others, however, deny that ch. i. 2-4 refers to the internal disorder of Judah, except as the effect of foreign tyranny. The *righteous* mentioned there are Israel as a whole, *the wicked* their heathen oppressors. So Hitzig, Ewald, König and practically Smend. Ewald is so clear that Habakkuk ascribes no sin to Judah, that he says we might be led by this to assign the prophecy to the reign of the righteous Josiah; but he prefers, because of the vivid sense which the prophet betrays of actual experience of the Chaldees, to date the passage from the reign of Jehoiakim, and to explain Habakkuk's silence about his people's sinfulness as due to his overwhelming impression of Chaldean cruelty. König² takes vv. 2-4 as a general complaint of the violence that fills the prophet's day, and vv. 5-11 as a detailed description

¹ Pages 53, 49. Kirkpatrick (Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*², art. 'Habakkuk,' 1893) puts it not later than the sixth year of Jehoiakim.

² *Einkl. in das A.T.*

of the Chaldeans, the instruments of this violence. Vv. 5-11, therefore, give not the judgement upon the wrongs described in vv. 2-4, but the explanation of them. Lebanon is already wasted by the Chaldeans (ii. 17) ; therefore the whole prophecy must be assigned to the days of Jehoiakim. Giesebrecht¹ and Wellhausen adhere to the view that no sins of Judah are mentioned, but that the *righteous* and *wicked* of ch. i. 4 are the same as in ver. 13, *viz.*, Israel and a heathen tyrant. But this leads them to dispute that the present order of the paragraphs of the prophecy is the right one. In ch. i. 5 the Chaldeans are represented as about to be raised up for the first time, although their violence has already been described in vv. 1-4, and in vv. 12-17 these are already in full career. Moreover ver. 12 follows on naturally to ver. 4. Accordingly these critics would remove the section vv. 5-11. Giesebrecht prefixes it to ver. 1, and dates the whole passage from the Exile. Wellhausen calls 5-11 an older passage than the rest of the prophecy, and removes it altogether as not Habakkuk's. To the latter he assigns what remains, i. 1-4, 12-17, ii. 1-5, and dates this from the reign of Jehoiakim.

Third : from each of these groups of critics Budde borrows something, but so as to construct an arrangement of the verses, and to reach a date, for the whole, from which both groups differ.² With Hitzig, Ewald, König, Smend, Giesebrecht and Wellhausen he agrees that the violence complained of in i. 2-4 is that inflicted by a heathen oppressor, *the wicked*, on the Jewish nation, the *righteous*. But with Kuenen and others he holds that the Chaldeans are raised up,

¹ *Beiträge zur Jesaiakritik*, 1890, pp. 197 f.

² *Studien u. Kritiken* for 1893 ; *Expositor*, May, 1895 ; *Enc. Bibl.*, coll. 1921 ff., 1901 ; *Gesch. der althebr. Litt.*, pp. 90 ff., 1906.

according to i. 5-11, to punish the violence complained of in i. 2-4 and again in i. 12-17. In these verses it is the ravages of another heathen power than the Chaldeans which Budde describes. The Chaldeans are still to come, and cannot be the same as the devastator whose long-continued tyranny is described in i. 12-17. They are rather the power which is to punish him. He can only be the Assyrian. But if this be so, the proper place for the passage, i. 5-11, which describes the rise of the Chaldeans, must be after the description of the Assyrian ravages in i. 12-17, and in the body of God's answer to the prophet which we find in ii. 2 ff. Budde, therefore, places i. 5-11 after ii. 2-4. But if the Chaldeans are still to come, and Budde thinks that they are described vaguely and with a good deal of imagination, the prophecy thus arranged must fall somewhere between 625, when Nabopolassar the Chaldean made himself independent of Assyria and King of Babylon, and 607, when Assyria fell. That the prophet calls Judah *righteous* is proof that he wrote after the great Reform of 621; hence, too, his reference to Torah and Mishpat (i. 4), and his complaint of the obstacles which Assyrian supremacy presented to their free course. As the Assyrian yoke appears not to have been felt anywhere in Judah by 608, Budde would fix the exact date of Habakkuk's prophecy about 615. To these conclusions of Budde, Cornill, who in 1891 had confidently assigned the prophecy of Habakkuk to the reign of Jehoiakim, gave his adherence in 1896.¹ Nowack² agrees that i. 5-11 is out of place, and admits that it follows quite well upon ii. 4, but for reasons he does not state he considers Budde's theory as unten-

¹ Cf. the opening of § 30 in the first edition of his *Einleitung* with that of § 34 in the third, fourth and fifth editions.

² *Handkommentar* z. A.T.

able. Sellin¹ grants that on Budde's rearrangement all runs smoothly, but denies that i. 5-11 is appropriate to the Chaldean and accepts Duhm's opinion² that the nation described in these verses is the Macedonian under Alexander—an opinion which is only possible if *Chaldeans* in i. 6 be regarded as not original or emended to *Khittim*. All that Marti allows to the prophet and dates from 605 B.C. is i. 5-10, 14 f. The rest, i. 2-4, 12a, 13, and ii. 1-4 he takes as a psalm of the second century.

Budde's able and ingenious argument has been subjected to a searching criticism by Professor Davidson, who emphasises first the difficulty of accounting for the transposition of ch. i. 5-11 from what Budde alleges to have been its original place after ii. 4 to its present position in chap. i.³ He points out that if ch. i. 2-4 and 12-17 and ii. 5 ff. refer to the Assyrian, it is strange the latter is not once mentioned. Again, by 615 we may infer (though we know little of Assyrian history at this time) that the Assyrian's hold on Judah was already too relaxed for the prophet to impute to him power to hinder the Law, especially as Josiah had begun to carry his reforms into the northern kingdom; and the knowledge of the Chaldeans displayed in i. 5-11 is too fresh and detailed⁴ to suit so early a date: it

¹ *Introd. to O.T.*, Eng. trans., p. 183, 1923.

² *Das Buch Habakkuk*, 1906.

³ Budde's explanation of this is, that to the later editors of the book, long after the Babylonian destruction of Jews, it was incredible that the Chaldean should be represented as the deliverer of Israel, and so the account of him was placed where, while his call to punish Israel for her sins was not emphasised, he should be pictured as destined to doom; and so the prophecy originally referring to the Assyrian was read of him. 'This is possible,' says Davidson, 'if it be true criticism is not without its romance.'

⁴ This in opposition to Budde's statement that the description of the Chaldeans in i. 5-11 'ist eine phantastische Schilderung' (p. 387).

was possible only after the battle of Carchemish. And again, it is improbable that we have two different nations, as Budde thinks, described by the very similar phrases in i. 11, *his own power becomes his god*, and in i. 16, *he sacrifices to his net*. Again, ch. i. 5-11 would not read quite naturally after ch. ii. 4. And in the woes pronounced on the oppressor it is not one nation, the Chaldeans, which are to spoil him, but all the remnant of the peoples (ii. 7, 8).

These objections are not inconsiderable. But are they conclusive? And if not, is any of the other theories of the prophecy less beset with difficulties?

The objections are scarcely conclusive. We have no proof that the power of Assyria was altogether removed from Judah by 615; on the contrary, even in 608 Assyria was still the power with which Egypt went forth to contend for the empire of the world. Seven years earlier her hand may well have been strong upon Palestine. Again, by 615 the Chaldeans, a people famous in Western Asia for a long time, had been ten years independent: men in Palestine may have been familiar with their methods of warfare; at least it is impossible to say they were not.¹ There is more weight in the objection drawn from the absence of the name of Assyria from all of the passages which Budde alleges describe it; nor do we get over all difficulties of text by inserting i. 5-11 between ii. 4 and 5. Besides, how does Budde explain i. 12b on the theory that it means Assyria? Is the clause not premature at that point? Does he propose to elide it, like Wellhausen? And in any case an erroneous transposition of the

¹ It is, however, a serious question whether it would be possible in 615 to describe the Chaldeans as *a nation that traversed the breadth of the earth to occupy dwelling-places that were not his own* (i. 6). This suits better after the battle of Carchemish.

original is impossible to prove and difficult to account for.¹

But have not the other theories of the Book of Habakkuk equally great difficulties? Surely, we cannot say that the *righteous* and the *wicked* in i. 4 mean something different from what they do in i. 13? But if this is impossible the construction of the book supported by the great majority of critics² falls to the ground. Professor Davidson justly says that it has 'something artificial in it' and 'puts a strain on the natural sense.'³ How can the Chaldeans be described in i. 5 as *just about to be raised up*, and in 14-17 as already for a long time the devastators of the earth? Ewald's, Hitzig's and König's views⁴ are equally beset by these difficulties; König's exposition also 'strains the natural sense.' Everything, in fact, points to i. 5-11 being out of its proper place; it is no wonder that Giesebrecht, Wellhausen and Budde independently arrived at this conclusion.⁵ Whether Budde be right in inserting i. 5-11 after ii. 4, there can be little doubt of the correctness of his views that i. 12-17 describe a heathen oppressor who is not the Chaldeans. Budde says this oppressor is Assyria. Can he be any one else? From 608 to 605 Judah was sorely beset by Egypt, who had overrun all Syria up to the Euphrates. The Egyptians killed Josiah, deposed his successor, and put their own vassal under a very heavy tribute; *gold and silver were exacted of the people of the land*: the picture of distress in i. 1-4 might easily be that of Judah in these three terrible years. And if we assigned

¹ See above, p. 123, n. 3.

² See above, pp. 120 ff.

³ Pages 49 and 50.

⁴ See above, pp. 120 ff.

⁵ Wellhausen in 1873 (see p. 661); Giesebrecht in 1890; Budde in 1892, before he had seen the opinions of either of the others (see *Stud. and Krit.*, 1893, p. 386, n. 2).

the prophecy to them, we should certainly give it a date at which the knowledge of the Chaldeans expressed in i. 5-11 was more probable than at Budde's date of 615. But then does the description in ch. i. 14-17 suit Egypt so well as it does Assyria? We can hardly affirm this, until we know more of what Egypt did in those days; but it is possible.

Therefore, the theory supported by the majority of critics being unnatural, we are, with our present meagre knowledge of the time, flung back upon Budde's interpretation that the prophet in i. 2-ii. 4 appeals from oppression by a heathen power, which is not the Chaldean, but upon which the Chaldean shall bring the just vengeance of God. The tyrant is either Assyria up to about 615 or Egypt from 608 to 605, and there is not a little to be said for the latter date.

In arriving at so uncertain a conclusion about i-ii. 4, we have but these consolations, that no other is possible in our present knowledge, and that the uncertainty will not hamper us much in our appreciation of Habakkuk's spiritual attitude and poetic gifts.¹

2. CHAP. II. 5-20

The dramatic piece i. 2-ii. 4 is succeeded by a series of taunt-songs, starting (after an introduction) from 6*b*, then 9, 12, 15 and (18) 19, and each opening with *Woe!* Their subject is, if we take Budde's interpreta-

¹ Cornill quotes a rearrangement of chs. i, ii, by Rothstein, who takes i. 2-4, 12*a*, 13, ii. 1-3, 4, 5*a*, i. 6-10, 14, 15*a*, ii. 6*b*, 7, 9, 10*a b* β , 11, 15, 16, 19, 18, as an oracle against Jehoiakim and the godless in Israel about 605, which during the Exile was worked up into the present oracle against Babylon. Cornill esteems this 'too complicated.' Budde (*Expositor*, 1895, pp. 372 ff.) and Nowack hold it untenable. Equally untenable, as shown by Marti, are the arguments of Lauterburg, Peiser and Happel for the unity of more or less the whole book, Lauterburg dating it about 545, Peiser in 609 (by a captive Jewish prince in Nineveh), Happel about 170, during the Syrian persecutions under Antiochus IV.

tion of the dramatic piece, the Assyrian and not the Chaldean ¹ tyrant. The text, as we shall see, is corrupt. Some words are manifestly wrong, and the rhythm must have suffered beyond restoration. In all probability these lyric Woes, or as many of them as are authentic—for there is doubt about one or two—were of equal length. Whether they all had the refrain now attached to two is more doubtful.

Hitzig suspected the authenticity of some parts of this series of songs. Stade ² and Kuenen have gone further and denied the genuineness of vv. 9-20. But this is with little reason. As Budde says, a series of Woes was to be expected here by a prophet who follows so much the example of Isaiah.³ In spite of Kuenen's objection, vv. 9-11 would not be strange of the Chaldean, but they suit the Assyrian better. Vv. 12-14 are doubtful: 12 recalls Micah iii. 10; 13 is a repetition of Jer. li. 58; 14 is a variant of Isa. xi. 9. Very likely Jer. li. 58, a late passage, is borrowed from this passage; yet the addition used here, *Are not these things* ⁴ *from Yahweh of Hosts?* looks as if it noted a citation. Vv. 15-17 are suitable to the Assyrian; there is no reason to take them from Habakkuk.⁵ The final song, vv. 18 and 19, has its Woe at the beginning of its second verse, and closely resembles the language of later prophets.⁶ Moreover, the refrain forms a suitable close at the end of ver. 17. Ver. 20 is a quotation

¹ As of course was universally supposed according to either of the other two interpretations given above.

² *Z.A.T.W.*, 1884, p. 154.

³ Cf. Isa. v. 8 ff. (x. 1-4), etc.

⁴ So LXX.

⁵ Cf. Davidson, p. 56, and Budde, p. 391, who allows 9-11 and 15-17.

⁶ *E.g.*, Isa. xl. 18 ff., xliv. 9 ff., xlv. 5 ff., etc. On this ground it is condemned by Stade, Kuenen and Budde. Davidson finds this not a serious difficulty, for, he points out, Habakkuk anticipates several later lines of thought.

from Zephaniah,¹ perhaps another sign of the composite character of the end of this chapter. Some take it to have been inserted as an introduction to the theophany in chap. iii.

Smend has drawn up a defence² of the whole passage, ii. 9-20, which he deems not only to stand in a natural relation to vv. 4-8, but to be indispensable to them. That the passage quotes from other prophets, he holds to be no proof against its authenticity. If we break off with ver. 8, he thinks that we must impute to Habakkuk the opinion that the wrongs of the world are chiefly avenged by human means—a conclusion which is not to be expected after ch. i-ii. 1 ff.

Lastly, Marti refers all ii. 5-19 to the eve of the fall of the Babylonian Empire—in contents and date parallel to Isaiah xiii f., xxi. 1-15.

3. CHAP. III

The third chapter, an Ode or Rhapsody, is ascribed to Habakkuk by its title. This, however, does not prove its authenticity: the title is too like those assigned to the Psalms in the period of the Second Temple.³ On the contrary, the title itself, the occurrence of the musical sign *Selah* in the contents, and the colophon suggest for the chapter a liturgical origin after the Exile.⁴ That this is more probable than the alternative

¹ See above, p. 38, n. 4.

² *A.T. Religionsgeschichte*, p. 229, n. 2.

³ Cf. the ascription by the LXX of Psalms cxlvi-cl to the prophets Haggai and Zechariah.

⁴ Cf. Kuenen, who conceives it as taken from a post-exilic collection of Psalms. See also Cheyne, *The Origin of the Psalter*: 'exilic or more probably post-exilic' (p. 125). 'The most natural position for it is in the Persian period. It was doubtless appended to Habakkuk, for the same reason for which Isa. lxiii. 7-lxiv was attached to the great prophecy of Restoration, viz., that the earlier national troubles seemed to the

opinion, that, being a genuine work of Habakkuk, the chapter was afterwards arranged as a Psalm for public worship, is confirmed by the fact that no other work of the prophets has been treated in the same way. Nor do the contents support authorship by Habakkuk. They reflect no definite historical situation like the preceding chapters. The style and temper are different. While in those the prophet speaks for himself, here it is the nation or congregation of Israel that addresses God. The language is not, as some maintain, late;¹ but the designation of the people as *Thine anointed*, a term which before the Exile was applied to the king, undoubtedly points to a post-exilic date. The figures, the theophany itself, are not necessarily archaic, but are more probably moulded on archaic models. There are many affinities with Psalms of a late date.

At the same time a number of critics² uphold the genuineness of the chapter, and they have some grounds for this. Habakkuk was, as we can see from chs. i and ii, a real poet. There was no need why a man of his temper should be bound down to reflecting only his own day. If so practical a prophet as Hosea, and one who has so closely identified himself with his times, was wont to escape from them to a retrospect of

Jewish Church to be typical of its own sore troubles after the Return. . . . The lovely closing verses of Hab. iii are also in a tone congenial to the later religion' (p. 156). Much less certain is the assertion that the language is imitative and artificial (*ibid.*); while the statement that in ver. 3—cf. with Deut. xxxiii. 2—we have an instance of the effort to avoid the personal name of the Deity (p. 287) is disproved by the use of the latter in 2 and other verses. With most moderns Marti recognises it as a product of the Second Temple; but would relegate it to a period as late as the Maccabean partly because iii. 13 speaks of *an anointed*, which implies that the Jews had once more a prince of their own.

¹ *ישע אה*, ver. 13, cannot be taken as a proof of lateness; read probably *הושע אה*.

² Pusey, Ewald, König, Sinker (*The Psalm of Habakkuk*, Cambridge, 1890), Kirkpatrick (Smith's *Bible Dict.*, art. 'Habakkuk'), Von Orelli.

the dealings of God with Israel from of old, why should not the same be natural for a prophet who was much less practical and more literary and artistic? There are also many phrases in the Psalm which may be interpreted as reflecting the same situation as chs. i, ii. All this, however, only proves possibility.

The Psalm has been adapted in Psalm lxxvii. 17-20.

CHAPTER X

THE PROPHET AS SCEPTIC

HABAKKUK I-II. 4

OF the prophet Habaḳḳuḳ we know nothing that is personal save his name—to our ears his somewhat odd name. It is the intensive form of a root which means to caress or embrace. More probably it was given to him as a child, than assumed as a symbol of his clinging to God.¹

Tradition says that Habakkuk was a priest, the son of Joshua, of the tribe of Levi, but this is only an inference from the late liturgical notes to the Psalm which has been appended to his prophecy.² All that

¹ חַבְבְּקֻק (the Greek Ἀμβακουμ, LXX version of the title of this book, and again the inscription to *Bel and the Dragon*, suggests the pointing חַבְבְּקֻק; Epiph., *De Vitis Proph.*—see next note—spells it Ἀββακουμ), from חֶבֶק, to embrace. Jerome: 'He is called "embrace" either because of his love to the Lord, or because he wrestles with God.' Luther: 'Habakkuk means one who comforts and holds up his people as one embraces a weeping person.' Fried. Delitzsch quotes Assy. ḥambakūku, the name of a garden plant (*Assyr. Handwörterbuch*, 281); and this etymology is approved by Marti who compares the name Susanna = Lily.

² See above, pp. 128 ff. The title to the Greek version of *Bel and the Dragon* bears that the latter was taken from the prophecy of Ham-bakoum, son of Jesus, of the tribe of Levi. Further details are offered in the *De Vitis Prophetarum* of (Pseud-) Epiphanius, *Epiph. Opera*, ed. Paris, 1622, Vol. II, p. 147, according to which Habakkuk was of Βεθζοχηρ, probably Βεθζαχαρίας, of 1 Macc. vi. 32, the modern Beit-Zakaryeh, a

we know is that he was a contemporary of Jeremiah, with a sensitiveness under wrong and impulses to question God which remind us of Jeremiah ; but with a literary power quite his own. We may emphasise the latter, even though we recognise upon his writing the influence of Isaiah's.

Habakkuk's originality, however, is deeper than style. He is the earliest known to us of a new school of religion in Israel. He is called *prophet*, but at first he does not adopt the attitude characteristic of the prophets. His face is set opposite to theirs. They address the nation Israel, on behalf of God : he rather speaks to God on behalf of Israel. Their task was Israel's sin, the proclamation of God's doom and the offer of His grace to their penitence. Habakkuk's task is God Himself, the effort to find what He means by permitting tyranny and wrong. They attack the sins, he is the first to state the problems, of life. To him the prophetic revelation, the Torah, is complete : it has been codified in Deuteronomy and enforced by Josiah. Habakkuk's business is not to add to it but to ask why it does not work. Why does God suffer wrong, so that the Torah is paralysed, and *Mishpat*, the prophetic *justice* or *judgement*, comes to nought ? The prophets travailed for Israel's character—to get the people to love justice till justice prevailed : Habakkuk feels justice cannot prevail in Israel, because of the disorder which God permits to fill the world. It is

little N. of Hebron, and placed by this notice, like Nahum's Elkosh, in the tribe of Simeon. His grave was shown in the neighbouring Keilah. The notice further alleges that when Nebuchadrezzar came up to Jerusalem Habakkuk fled to Ostracine, where he travelled in the country of the Ishmaelites ; but he returned after the fall of Jerusalem, and died in 538, two years before the return of the exiles. *Bel and the Dragon* tells a story of his miraculous carriage of food to Daniel in the lions' den soon after Cyrus took Babylon.

true that he arrives at a prophetic attitude, and authoritatively declares God's will ; but he begins by searching for the latter, with appreciation of the obscurity cast over it by the facts of life. He complains to God, asks questions and expostulates. This is the beginning of speculation in Israel. It does not go far, but is satisfied with stating questions *to* God ; it does not, directly at least, state questions *against* Him. But Habakkuk feels that revelation is baffled by experience, that the facts of life bewilder a man who believes in the God whom the prophets have declared to Israel. As in Zephaniah prophecy begins to exhibit traces of apocalypse, so in Habakkuk we find it developing the first impulses of speculation.

We have seen that the course of events which troubles Habakkuk and renders the Torah ineffectual is obscure. On one interpretation of these two chapters, that which takes the present order of their verses as the original, Habakkuk asks why God is silent in face of the injustice which fills the whole horizon (ch. i. 1-4), is told to look round among the heathen and see how God is raising the Chaldeans (i. 5-11), presumably to punish this injustice (if it be Israel's own) or to overthrow it (if vv. 1-4 mean that it is inflicted by a foreign power). But the Chaldeans only aggravate the prophet's problem ; they are a wicked oppressive people : how can God suffer them ? (i. 12-17). Then come the prophet's waiting for an answer (ii. 1) and the answer itself (ii. 2 ff.). Another interpretation takes the passage about the Chaldeans (i. 5-11) to be out of place where it now lies, removes it to after ch. ii. 4 as part of God's answer to the prophet's problem, and leaves the remainder of ch. i. as the description of the Assyrian oppression of Israel, baffling the Torah and perplexing the prophet's faith in a Holy and Just

God.¹ Of these two views the former is, we have seen, artificial, and though the latter is not proved, the arguments for it are sufficient to justify us in re-arranging chs. i-ii. 4 in accordance with its proposals.

i. 1. *The Oracle which Habakkuk the Prophet
Received by Vision.*²

2. *How long have I called, O Yahweh,
And Thou dost not hear.
I cry out to Thee, Wrong !
Thou sendest no help.*

3. *Why dost Thou make me see sorrow
And gaze upon trouble,
Violence and wrong confront me
And quarrel and strife.*³

4. *Therefore benumbed is the Law,
Justice never gets forth,⁴
But the wicked beleaguers the righteous
And justice is twisted.*⁵

12. *Art Thou not of old, O Yahweh,
My God, my Holy, undying ?*⁶

¹ See above, pp. 120 ff.

² Heb. *saw*.

³ Text uncertain ; Heb. *and there is quarrel and strife lifts up*, but the line should have two beats only, neither verb is necessary and the second one an impossible transitive. So with Marti I omit them.

⁴ *Never gets away*, to use a colloquialism.

⁵ The text adds *therefore comes forth*, which overloads the line and is clearly a scribe's dittography of the same words in the preceding couplet.

⁶ *Undying*. Heb. *we shall not die*, for which many Jewish interpreters read *Thou diest not*. The rest of ver. 12, *O Yahweh for judgement hast thou set him, and O my Rock for punishment hast Thou appointed him*, is certainly out of place before the prophet's questioning in vv. 13-17, and rightly regarded by most moderns as an intrusion.

13. *Too pure of eyes to view evil,
And look upon trouble Thou canst not.
Why then dost Thou look upon traitors,
Art dumb when the wicked swallows the righteous ?*¹
14. *Thou hast made mankind like fish of the sea,
Like vermin that have no ruler.*²
15. *He draws it all to his net
And sweeps it into his seine.*³
16. *For this to his net he sacrifices
And to his seine burns incense,
For by them is his portion rich
And fat is his victual.*
17. *Shall he for ever draw his sword*⁴
*And ruthlessly massacre*⁵ *nations ?*
- ii. 1. *On my watch-tower I will stand
And take up my post on the rampart,*⁶
*I will watch to see what He says to me
What answer I get*⁷ *to my plea.*
2. *And Yahweh answered me saying :
Write down the Vision,
Make it plain upon tablets
That he may run who reads it.*

¹ So LXX ; Heb. *the more righteous than he*.

² Heb. adds *he hath lifted with his hook*, but the different tense and the absence of a suffix—not to speak of the overloading of the rhythm—show this to be a gloss.

³ Heb. adds *so rejoices and exults*, probably another gloss.

⁴ So Giesebrecht (see above, p. 121 n. 1), reading חֶעֱלִיכֵן יִרְיֵק חַרְבוֹ, *Shall he therefore empty his net ?*

⁵ Wellhausen, reading יַחַרֵּב for יַחַרֵּב.

⁶ מִצֹּר. But Wellhausen takes it as from נֹצֵר and = *ward or watch-tower*. So Nowack.

⁷ So Heb. ; but Syr. and Wellhausen, *what answer He returns to my plea*.

- ii. 3. *For*¹ *the vision is still for a time to be fixed,*
*Yet it speeds*² *to the end, and shall not fail :*
Though it linger, wait thou for it ;
*Coming it shall come, and shall not be behind.*³
4. *Lo ! swollen,*⁴ *not level is his*⁵ *soul within him ;*
*But the righteous shall live by his faithfulness.*⁶
- i. 5. *Look ye traitors,*⁷ *look well,*
*Shudder and be ye shocked ;*⁸
*For I am*⁹ *to do a work in your days,*
Ye will not believe it when told.
6. *For, lo, I am raising the Kasdim,*¹⁰
A folk the most bitter and hasty,
*That traverse*¹¹ *the breadths of the earth,*
To occupy dwellings that are not theirs.

¹ Bredenkamp (*Stud. u. Krit.*, 1889, pp. 161 ff.) suggests that the writing on the tablets begins here and goes on to ver. 5a. Budde (*Z.A.T.W.*, 1889, pp. 155 f.) takes the כִּי which opens it as simply equivalent to the Greek ὅτι, introducing, like our marks of quotation, the writing itself. So above.

² נִיפָה, lit. *pants*. Cf. Psalm xxvii, 12. Bredenkamp, etc., emend to נִיפָרָה.

³ *Not be late*, or past its fixed time.

⁴ So literally the Heb. עֲפָלָה, *i.e.* *arrogant, false* : cf. the colloquial expression *swollen-head* = conceit, as opposed to level-headed. Bredenkamp (*Stud. u. Krit.*, 1889, p. 121) reads הִנֵּעַלָה for חָנָה עֲפָלָה. Wellhausen suggests הִנֵּה הָעוֹל, *Lo, the sinner*, in contrast to צָרִיק of next clause. So Nowack. Marti, הִנֵּה רָשָׁע עֲפָלָה, *lo the wicked his soul has fainted within him*.

⁵ LXX, wrongly *my*.

⁶ LXX, πίστις, *faith*, and so in N.T.

⁷ So LXX and Syr. ; Heb. *among the nations*.

⁸ So to bring out the assonance, reading הַתְּמָהֳמָהוּ וְהַתְּמָהֳמָהוּ.

⁹ So LXX ; Heb. *He* or *One is*.

¹⁰ Or Chaldeans ; on the name and people see above, pp. 19 f.

¹¹ From here on Heb. has the verbs and pronouns in the singular.

7. *Awful and terrible are they ;
From themselves start their purpose and rising.*
8. *Fleeter than leopards their steeds,
Swifter than night-wolves.
Their horsemen leap ¹ from afar ;
They swoop like the eagle a-haste to devour.*
9. *All for wrong do they come ;
The set of their faces is forward (?) ²
And they sweep up captives like sand.*
10. *They—at kings do they scoff,
And princes are sport to them.
They—they laugh at each fortress,
Heap dust up and take it !*
11. *Then the wind shifts, ³ and they pass !
But doomed are those whose might is their god ! ⁴*

The difficulty of deciding between the various arrangements of the two chapters of Habakkuk does not prevent us from appreciating his argument. What he feels throughout (this is obvious, however you arrange

¹ Omit with LXX ופרשיו (evidently a dittography) and the lame יבאן which is also omitted by LXX and was probably inserted to afford a verb for the second פרשיו. Others omit leap, ופשו.

² A problematical rendering. מנמה is found only here, and probably means *direction*. Hitzig translates *desire, effort, striving*. קדימה, *towards the front or forward* ; but elsewhere it means only *eastward* : קדים, *the east wind*. Cf. Judg. v. 21, נהל קדומים נהל קישון, *a river of spates or rushes is the river Kishon* (*Hist. Geog.*, p. 395). Perhaps we should change פניהם to a singular suffix, as in the clauses before and after, and this would leave מ to form with קדימה a participle from הקדים (cf. Amos ix. 10).

³ Or *their spirit changes, or they change like the wind* (Wellhausen suggests כרוח, *and they transgress, i.e., cross the line or measure set them by God*). Grätz reads כח and יחליף, *he renews his strength*.

⁴ Von Orelli. For אשם Wellhausen proposes וישם, *and sets*

his verses) is the tyranny of a great heathen power,¹ Assyrian, Egyptian or Chaldean. The prophet's horizon is filled with wrong:² Israel thrown into disorder, revelation paralysed, justice perverted.³ But, like Nahum, Habakkuk feels not for Israel alone. The Tyrant has outraged humanity.⁴ He *sweeps peoples into his net*, and as soon as he empties this, he fills it again *ceaselessly*, as if there were no just God. He exults in his cruelty, and has success so unbroken that he worships the means of it. In itself such impiety is gross enough, but to a heart that believes in God it is a problem of exquisite pain. Habakkuk's is the burden of the finest faith. He illustrates the commonplace of religious doubt, that problems arise and become rigorous in proportion to the purity and tenderness of a man's conception of God. It is not the coarsest but the finest temperaments which are exposed to scepticism. Every advance in assurance of God or in appreciation of His character develops new perplexities in face of the facts of experience, and faith becomes her own most cruel troubler. Habakkuk's questions are not due to any cooling of the religious temper, but are begotten of the heat and ardour of prophecy in its encounter with experience. His tremulousness, for instance, is impossible without the high knowledge of God's purity and faithfulness, which older prophets had achieved in Israel:—

*Art not Thou of old, Yahweh,
My God, my Holy ?
Purer of eye than to behold evil,
And incapable of looking upon wrong ?*

¹ *The wicked* of ch. i. 4 must, as we have seen, be the same as *the wicked* of ch. i. 13—a heathen oppressor of *the righteous*, i.e., the people of God.

² i. 3.

³ i. 4.

⁴ i. 13-17.

His despair is that which comes only from eager and persevering habits of prayer :—

*How long, O Yahweh, have I called
And Thou dost not hear !
I cry to Thee of wrong
And Thou givest no help.*

His questions, too, are bold with that sense of God's absolute power, which flashed so bright in Israel as to blind men's eyes to secondary and intermediate causes. *Thou*, he says,—

*Thou hast made men like fishes of the sea,
Like worms without ruler,*

charging the Almighty, in almost the temper of Job, with being the cause of the cruelty inflicted by the unchecked tyrant upon the nations; *for shall evil happen, and Yahweh not done it?*¹ Thus all through we perceive that Habakkuk's trouble springs from the central founts of prophecy. This scepticism—if we may venture to give the name to the first motions in Israel's mind of the temper which undoubtedly became scepticism—was the inevitable heritage of prophecy: the stress and pain to which prophecy was forced by its strong convictions in face of the facts of experience. Habakkuk, *the prophet*, as he is called, stood in the direct line of his order, but just because of that he was the father also of Israel's religious doubt.

But discontent springing from sources so pure was the preparation of its own healing. In a verse of exquisite beauty the prophet describes the temper in which he trusted for an answer to his doubts :—

¹ Amos iii. 6. See Vol. I, p. 88.

*On my watch-tower will I stand,
And take up my post on the rampart ;
I will watch to see what He says to me,
And what answer I get to my plea.*

This verse is not to be passed over, as if its metaphors were merely of literary effect. They express rather the moral temper in which the prophet carries his doubt, or, to use New Testament language, *the good conscience, which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck*. Nor is this temper patience only and a certain elevation of mind, nor only a fixed attention and sincere willingness to be answered. Through the chosen words there breathes a noble sense of responsibility. The prophet feels he has a post to hold. He knows the heritage of truth, won by the minds of the past ; and in a world seething with disorder, he will take his stand upon that and see what more his God will send him. At the very least, he will not indolently drift, but feel he has a standpoint, however narrow, and bravely hold it. Such has ever been the attitude of the greatest sceptics—not only earnestness and sincerity, but the recognition of duty towards the truth : the conviction that even the most tossed and troubled minds have somewhere a *ποῦ στῶ* appointed of God, and upon it interests human and divine to defend. Without such a conscience, scepticism, however gifted, avails nothing. Men who drift never discover, never grasp aught. They are only dazzled by shifting gleams of the truth, only fretted and broken by experience.

Taking his stand within the patient temper, but especially on the conscience of his order, the prophet waits for his answer and the healing of his trouble. The answer comes to him in the promise of *a Vision*

which, though it seem to linger, will not be later than the time fixed by God. *A Vision* is something realised, experienced—something that will be as actual to the waiting prophet as the cruelty which now fills his sight. Obviously a series of historical events is meant, by which, in the course of time, the oppressor of the nations shall be overthrown and the righteous vindicated. Upon the rearrangement of the text proposed by Budde,¹ this series of events is the rise of the Chaldeans, and it is an argument for his proposal that the promise of *a Vision* requires some such historical picture to follow it as we find in the description of the Chaldeans—ch. i. 5–11. This, too, is explicitly introduced by terms of vision: *See among the nations and look round. . . . Yea, behold I am about to raise the Kasdim.* But before this Vision is given,² and for the uncertain interval of waiting ere the facts come to pass, the Lord enforces upon His watching servant the great moral principle that arrogance and tyranny cannot, from the nature of them, last, and that if the righteous be only patient he will survive them:—

*Lo, swollen, not level, is his soul within him ;
But the righteous shall live by his faithfulness.*

We have already seen³ that the text of the first line of this couplet is uncertain. Yet the meaning is obvious, partly in the words themselves, and partly by their implied contrast with the second line. The soul of the wicked is radically morbid: *inflated, swollen* (unless we should read *perverted*, which more

¹ See above, pp. 121 ff.

² Its proper place in Budde's rearrangement is after ch. ii. 4.

³ Above, p. 136, n. 4.

plainly means the same ¹), not *level*, not natural and normal. In the nature of things it cannot endure. *But the righteous shall live by his faithfulness.* This word, wrongly translated *faith* by the Greek and other versions, is concentrated by Paul in his repeated quotation from the Greek ² upon that single act of faith by which the sinner secures forgiveness and justification. With Habakkuk it is a wider term. '*Emunah*,³ from a verb meaning originally to be firm, is used in the Old Testament in the physical sense of steadfastness. So it is applied to the arms of Moses held up by Aaron and Hur over the battle with Amalek: *they were steadiness till the going down of the sun.*⁴ It is also used of the faithful discharge of public office,⁵ and of fidelity as between man and wife.⁶ It is also faithful testimony,⁷ equity in judgement,⁸ truth in speech,⁹ and sincerity or honest dealing.¹⁰ Of course it has faith in God as its secret—the verb from which it is derived is the regular Hebrew term to believe—but it is rather the temper which faith produces of endurance, steadfastness, integrity. Let the righteous, however baffled his faith be by experience, hold on, loyal to God and duty, and he shall live. Though St. Paul, as we have said, used the Greek rendering of *faith* for the enforcement of trust in God's mercy through Jesus Christ as the secret of forgiveness and life, it is rather to Habakkuk's wider intention of patience and fidelity that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews returns in his fuller quotation of the verse: *For yet a little while and He that shall come will come and will not*

¹ עֲקֵלָה instead of עֲפֵלָה.

² Rom. i. 17; Gal. iii. 11.

³ אֱמוּנָה.

⁴ Exod. xvii. 12.

⁵ 2 Chron. xix. 9.

⁶ Hosea ii. 22 (Heb.).

⁷ Prov. xiv. 5.

⁸ Isa. xi. 5.

⁹ Prov. xii. 17; cf. Jer. ix. 2.

¹⁰ Prov. xii. 22, xxviii. 30.

*tarry ; now the just shall live by faith, but if he draw back My soul shall have no pleasure in him.*¹

Such then is the tenor of the passage. In face of experience that baffles faith, the duty of Israel is patience in loyalty to God. In this the nascent scepticism of Israel received its first commandment, and this it never forsook. Intellectual questions arose, of which Habakkuk's were but the foreboding—questions concerning not only the mission and destiny of the nation, but the foundation of justice and the character of God Himself. Yet did no sceptic, however bold and however provoked, forsake his *faithfulness*. Even Job, when audaciously arraigning the God of his experience, turned from Him to God as in his heart of hearts he believed He must be, experience notwithstanding. Even the Preacher, amid the flux and drift which he finds in the universe, holds to the conclusion of the whole matter in a command, which better than any other defines the contents of the *faithfulness* enforced by Habakkuk : *Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole of man*. It has been the same with the mass of the race. Repeatedly disappointed of their hopes, and crushed for ages beneath intolerable tyranny, have they not exhibited the same heroic temper with which their first great questioner was endowed ? Endurance—this above all others has been the quality of Israel : *though He slay me, yet will I trust Him*. And, therefore, as Paul's adaptation, *The just shall live by faith*, has become the motto of evangelical Christianity, so we may say that Habakkuk's original of it has been the motto and the fame of Judaism : *The righteous shall live by his faithfulness*.

¹ Heb. x. 37 38.

CHAPTER XI

TYRANNY IS SUICIDE

HABAKKUK II. 5-20

IN the style of his master Isaiah, Habakkuk follows his *Vision* with lyrics on the same subject: ch. ii. 5-20. They are taunt-songs, the most of them beginning with *Woe unto*, addressed to the oppressor. Perhaps they were at first of equal length, and it has been suggested that the refrain in which two of them close—

*For men's blood, and earth's waste,
Cities and their inhabitants—*

was once attached to each of the others as well. But the text has been too much altered, besides suffering interpolations,¹ to permit of its restoration, and we can only reproduce these taunts as they now run in the Hebrew text. There are quotations (not necessarily an argument against Habakkuk's authorship); but, as a whole, the expression is original, and some lines are of especial force and freshness. Verses 5-6*a* are properly an introduction, the first *Woe* commencing with 6*b*.

¹ See above, pp. 127 f.
(144)

The belief which inspires these songs is simple. Tyranny is intolerable. In the nature of things it cannot endure, but works out its own penalties. By oppressing so many nations, the tyrant prepares the instruments of his destruction. As he treats them, so in time shall they treat him. He is like a debtor who increases the number of his creditors. Some day they shall rise and exact from him the last penny. So that in cutting off others he is *but forfeiting his own life*. The violence done to nature, the deforesting of Lebanon for instance, and the vast hunting of wild beasts, shall recoil on him. This line of thought is interesting. We have already seen in prophecy, and especially in Isaiah, the beginnings of Hebrew Wisdom—the attempt to uncover the moral processes of life and express a philosophy of history. But hardly anywhere have we found so complete an absence of all reference to the direct interference of God Himself in the punishment of the tyrant; for *the cup of Yahweh's right hand* in ver. 16 is the survival of an ancient metaphor. These *proverbs* or *taunt-songs*, in conformity with the proverbs of the later Wisdom, dwell upon the inherent tendency to decay of all injustice. Tyranny, they assert, and history has confirmed them—tyranny is suicide.

The last of the taunt-songs, which treats of the subject of idolatry, is probably, as we have seen, not from Habakkuk's hand, but of a later date.¹

¹ See above, pp. 127 f. Nowack (1897) agrees that Cornill's and others' conclusion that vv. 9-20 are not Habakkuk's is too sweeping. He takes the first, second and fourth of the taunt-songs as authentic, but assigns the third (vv. 12-14) and the fifth (18-20) to another hand. He deems the refrain, 8*b* and 17*b*, to be a gloss, and puts 19 before 18. Driver, *Introd.*, 6th ed., holds to the authenticity of all the verses.

INTRODUCTION TO THE TAUNT-SONGS (ii. 5-6a)

- ii. 5. *Woe to the . . .¹ treacherous,
The arrogant fellow, unsatisfied (?)²
Who makes his greed wide as Sheol ;
Like death, he has never enough.
He hath swept to himself all the nations,
And gathered him all the peoples.*
- 6a. *Shall not all these lift a proverb upon him.
And a taunt-song against him, and say ? :—*

FIRST TAUNT-SONG (ii. 6b-8)

- 6b. *Woe to him who multiplies what is not his,³
And loads him with debts !⁴*
7. *Shall not thy creditors⁵ suddenly rise,
And thy rufflers wake up,
And thou be for spoil⁶ to them ?*

¹ The text reads, *For also wine is treacherous*, under which we might suspect some such original as, *As wine is treacherous, so the proud fellow*, etc. (or, as Davidson suggests, *Like wine is the treacherous dealer*), were it not that *wine* appears neither in LXX nor Syr. Wellhausen suggests that *היין*, *wine*, is a corruption of *הוי*, with which the verse, like vv. 6b, 9, 12, 15, 19, may have originally begun, but according to 6a the taunt-songs, opening with *הוי*, start first in 6b. Bredenkamp proposes *וְאִפְסָם בְּאֵין*; Marti *הוי בִּין*.

² The text is *יָנוּה*, a verb not elsewhere found in the O.T., and conjectured by A.V. and R.V. to mean *keepeth at home*, because the allied noun means *homestead*. Syr. *is not satisfied*, and Wellhausen proposes *יָרוּה* with that sense. See Davidson's note.

³ Some hand has here intruded with the exclamation *How long ?*

⁴ A.V. *thick clay*, which is reached by breaking up the word *עֲבָטִית*, *pledge* or *debt*, occurring only here, into *עֵב*, *thick cloud*, and *טִיט*, *clay*

⁵ Literally *thy biters*, *נֹשְׁכִיךְ*, but *נֹשֶׁךְ*, *biting*, is *interest* or *usury* and the Hiphill of *נֹשֶׁךְ* is *to exact interest*.

⁶ LXX sing., Heb. pl.

8. *Because thou hast spoiled many nations,
The rest of the peoples shall all spoil thee.
For men's blood, and earth's waste,
The city and all her inhabitants.*¹

SECOND TAUNT-SONG

9. *Woe to him that gains wrongful gain
And stores up evil for his house,²
To set upon high his nest,
To be saved from the grasp of calamity.*
10. *Thou hast planned shame for thy house ;
Thou hast cut off³ many peoples,
Forfeiting thine own life.⁴
For the stone shall cry out from the wall,
And the timber rafter⁵ shall echo it.*

THIRD TAUNT-SONG

12. *Woe to him that builds a city in blood,⁶
And founds a town in iniquity !⁷*
13. *Lo, is it not from Yahweh of Hosts,⁸
That the nations shall toil for smoke,⁹
And the peoples wear out for nought ?*

¹ This couplet occurs again in ver. 17. Wellhausen thinks it suits neither here nor there. But it suits all the taunt-songs, and some suppose that it once formed the refrain to each. Many take it as a later addition. The city is Jerusalem.

² This line needs a verb both for sense and rhythm and it may be supplied as above from Amos iii. 10. *House, dynasty or people.*

³ So LXX ; Heb. *cutting off*.

⁴ The grammatical construction is obscure, if the text be correct. There is no mistaking the meaning.

⁵ כַּפִּיִם, not elsewhere found in the O.T., is in Rabbinic Hebrew both *cross-beam* and *lath*.

⁶ Micah iii. 10.

⁷ Jer. xxii. 13.

⁸ *Lo from Yahweh of Hosts* is possibly a later intrusion.

⁹ Literally *fire*.

- ii. 14. *But the earth shall be filled
With the knowledge of Yahweh's glory,¹
Like the waters that cover the sea.*

FOURTH TAUNT-SONG

15. *Woe to him that gives his neighbour to drink,
From the cup of his wrath² till he be drunken,
That he may gloat on his³ nakedness !*
16b. *Drink thou in thy turn and stagger.⁴
Comes round to thee the cup in Yahweh's right
hand,*
16a. *And thou satest thee with shame not with glory.⁵*
17. *For the violence to Lebánon shall cover thee,
The destruction of the beasts shall affray thee.⁶
For men's blood, and earth's waste,
The city and all her inhabitants.⁷*

FIFTH TAUNT-SONG

19. *Woe to him who says to timber, Awake !
Arise ! to a dumb stone.*

¹ Jer. li. 58 : which original ?

² After Wellhausen's suggestion to read **מספח חמתו** instead of the text **מספח חמתך**, adding, or mixing, thy wrath. Kittel and Marti for **ואף** read **אפו** and transfer to the end of the first line.

³ So LXX Q. ; Heb. *their*.

⁴ Read **הרעל** (cf. Nahum ii. 4 ; Zech. xii. 2). The text is **הערל**, not found elsewhere, which has been conjectured to mean *uncover the foreskin*. And there is some ground for this, as parallel to *his nakedness* in the previous clause. As above, Wellhausen removes the first line to the end of the verse.

⁵ Here follows a line, *and foul shame on thy glory*—so R.V. for **קיקלון**, which A.V. has taken as two words—**קי**, for which cf. Jer. xxv. 27, where however the text is probably corrupt, and **קלון**. With this confusion cf. above, ver. 6, **עבטיט**.

⁶ Read with LXX **יחתך** for **יחיתך** of the text.

⁷ See above, ver. 8.

18. *What boots an image, when its artist has graven it,
A casting and oracle of lies,
That its moulder confides in it,
Making dumb idols ?
Can it reveal ?
Lo, it . . .¹ with gold and silver ;
No breath at all in the heart of it.*
20. *But Yahweh is in His Holy Temple :
Silence before Him, all earth !*

¹ וְקַסְרֵשׁ .

CHAPTER XII

'IN THE MIDST OF THE YEARS'

HABAKKUK III

WE have seen the impossibility of determining the age of the ode attributed to Habakkuk in the third chapter.¹ But this is only one of the problems raised by that poem. Much of its text is corrupt, and the meaning of some words is uncertain. As in most Hebrew poems of description, the tenses of the verbs puzzle us; we cannot always say whether the poet sings of what is past, present or future, and this difficulty is increased by his subject, a revelation of God in nature for the deliverance of Israel. Is this the deliverance from Egypt, with the tempests which accompanied it? Or have the features of the Exodus been borrowed to describe another deliverance, or to sum up the constant manifestation of Yahweh for His people's help?

The introduction, in ver. 2, is clear. The singer has heard what is to be heard of Yahweh, and His deeds in the past. He prays for a revival of these *in the midst of the years*. The times are full of trouble and turmoil. Would that God, in the present con-

¹Above, pp. 128 ff.
(150)

fusion of baffled hopes and broken issues, made Himself manifest as of old! *In turmoil remember mercy!* To render *turmoil* by *wrath*, as if it were God's anger against which the singer's heart appealed, is not true to the word itself,¹ affords no parallel to *the midst of the years*, and misses the situation. Israel cries from a state of life in which the years are huddled and full of turmoil. We need not wish to fix the date more precisely than the writer does, but may leave it with him *in the midst of the years*.

There follows the description of the Great Theophany, of which, in his own times, the singer has heard. It is probable that he has in his memory the events of the Exodus and Sinai. On this point his geographical allusions agree with his descriptions of nature. He draws the latter from the desert side of Israel's history. He introduces none of the sea-monsters, or imputations of arrogance and rebellion to the sea itself, which Babylonian mythology scattered through the later poetry of the Hebrews. The Theophany takes place in a tempest of thunder and rain, the only process of nature upon which the desert poets of Arabia dwell with detail. In harmony with this, God appears from the southern desert, from Teman and Paran, as in the theophanies in Deuteronomy xxxiii and the Song of Deborah;² a few lines recall the Song of the

¹ נִיחַ nowhere in O.T. means *wrath*, but either roar of thunder (Job xxxvii. 2) and of horsehoofs (xxxix. 24), or the raging of the wicked (iii. 17) or the commotion of fear (iii. 26; Isa. xiv. 3).

² *Yahweh from Sinai hath come,
And risen on us from Se'ir:
Hath flashed from the hills of Paran
And sped from Meribah of Kadesh:
From the South blazed (?) fire on them.*

Deut. xxxiii. 2, slightly altered after the LXX. *South*: some form of

Exodus,¹ and there are resemblances to the phraseology of the Sixty-Eighth Psalm. The poet sees under trouble the tents of Kushan and Midian, tribes of Sinai. And though the Theophany is with floods of rain and lightning, and foaming of waters, it is not with hills, rivers or sea that God is angry, but with the *nations*, the oppressors of His people, in order that He may deliver the latter. All this, taken with the fact that no mention is made of Egypt, proves that, while the singer draws chiefly upon the marvellous events of the Exodus and Sinai for his description, he celebrates not these alone but all the ancient triumphs of God over the oppressors of Israel. Compare the line—these be *His ways from of old*.

The report fills the poet with trembling (ver. 16 returns upon vv. 2-6), and although his language is too obscure to permit us to follow with certainty the course of his feeling, he appears to await in confidence the issue of Israel's present troubles. His argument seems, that such a God may be trusted still, in face of invasion (ver. 16). The next verse, however, does not express the experience of trouble from human foes; but figuring drought, barrenness and poverty, the poet in the name of Israel declares that, in spite of those, he will rejoice in the God of their salvation (ver. 17). So sudden is this change from human foes to natural

יָמִין must be read to bring the line into parallel with the others; תִּימָן. Teman, is from the same root.

*Yahweh, in Thine outset from Se'ir,
In Thy march from the range of Edom,
Earth shook, heaven swayed,
Yea, the clouds dropped water.
Mountains flowed down before Yahweh,
Yon Sinai at the face of the God of Israel.*

Judges v. 4, 5.

¹Exod. xv.

plagues, that some have here felt a passage to another poem describing a different situation. But the last lines, with their confidence in the *God of salvation*, a term always used of deliverance from enemies, and the boast, borrowed from the Eighteenth Psalm, *He maketh my feet like to hinds' feet, and gives me to march on my heights*, reflect the same circumstances as the bulk of the Psalm, and offer no grounds to doubt the unity of the whole.¹

PSALM ² OF HABAKKUK THE PROPHET (?)

Set to Music

- iii. 2. *Yahweh, I have heard the report of Thee ;
I stand in awe ! ³
Yahweh, revive ⁴ Thy work in the midst of the years,
In the midst of the years make Thee known ; ⁵
In turmoil ⁶ remember mercy !*

¹ In this case ver. 17 would be the only one which roused suspicion that it was an intrusion.

² תפלה, lit. Prayer, but used for Psalm: cf. Psalm cii. 1. Heb. *Shigionôth*, passionate (?) song or music. But LXX read *Neginoth* (as in ver. 19), music of stringed instruments.

³ Sinker takes with this the first two words of next line: *I have trembled, Yahweh, at Thy work*. But Marti, etc., for יראתי, feared, would (after LXX, κατενόησα) read ראיתי, *I have seen Thy work*.

⁴ For הַיָּהוָה some would read הַיָּהוָה, *display it* (W. H. Ward), which is a good parallel to *make Thyself known* in the next line.

⁵ תודע, Imp. Niph., after LXX, ὁμοδοξάτω. The Hebrew has תודיע, Hi. *make known*.

⁶ רָעָן, *turmoil, noise*, as in Job: a meaning that offers a better parallel to *in the midst of the years* than *wrath*, which the word also means. Davidson, however, thinks it more natural to understand the *wrath* manifest at the coming of Yahweh to judgement. So Sinker, Wellhausen, Marti, Ward, Moffatt.

- iii. 3. *God cometh from Teman,¹
The Holy from Mount Paran.²
He covers the heavens with His glory,
And filled with His praise is the earth.*
4. *His³ flash is like lightning ;
He has rays from each hand of Him,
Therein⁴ is the veil of His might.*
5. *Pestilence travels before Him,
The plague-fire breaks forth at His feet.*
6. *He stands and earth is shaken,⁵
He looks and startles nations ;
And the ancient mountains are cloven,
The hills everlasting sink down.
These be His ways from of old.⁶*
7. *Under trouble I see the tents of Kûshân,⁷
The curtains of Midian's land are quivering.*
8. *Is it with hills⁸ Yahweh is wroth ?
Or is Thine anger with rivers ?*

¹ Vulg. *ab. Austro, from the South.* See note 2 on p. 151.

² LXX adds *κατασκίου δασέος*, which seems the translation of a clause, perhaps a gloss, containing the name of Mount Se'ir, as in the theophanies, Deut. xxxiii. 2, Judg. v. 4. See Sinkler, p. 45.

³ So LXX, Syr. ; Heb. *the*.

⁴ Wellhausen, reading *וַיַּעַשׂ* for *וַיַּעַל*, translates *He made them*, etc.

⁵ So LXX. Heb. *and measures the earth*.

⁶ This is the only way of rendering the line so as not to make it seem superfluous : so it sums up the theophany from ver. 3 onwards ; a new strophe now begins. There is therefore no need to omit the verse, as Wellhausen, etc., do.

⁷ LXX, *Αἰθιοπες* ; but these are Kush, and the parallelism requires a tribe in Arabia. Calvin rejects *Ethiopian* on the same ground, but takes the reference as to King Kushan in Judg. iii. 8, 10. The Midianite wife of Moses is called the Kushite (Num. xii. 1).

⁸ For *הַבְּהָרִים*, *is it with streams*, read *הַבְּהָרִים*, *is it with hills* : because hills have already been mentioned, and rivers occur in the next line, separated by the same disjunctive particle, *וְ*, which separates *the sea*.

*Or Thy wrath with the sea,
That Thou ridest it ¹ with horses,
Thy chariots of victory ?*

9. *Thy bow is stripped bare ;²
Thou gluttest (?) Thy shafts.³
Into rivers Thou cleavest the earth ;⁴*
10. *Mountains see Thee and writhe ;
The rainstorm sweeps on :⁵*

¹ Heb. omits *it*, but LXX suggests it.

² Questionable: the verb *תָּעַר*, Ni. of a supposed *עָרָה*, does not elsewhere occur, and is conjectured from the noun *עָרָה*, nakedness, and *עָרָה*, stripping. LXX, ἐντείνων ἐνέτεινας; Wellhausen reads after 2 Sam. xxiii. 18, *עוֹרֵר תָּעוֹרֵר*, *Thou bringest into action Thy bow*. To Marti and others *יִשְׁדָּעָה* of the previous line suggests itself as a misreading of *אֲשָׁפָה* or *אֲשַׁפְּתָה*, *thy quiver*, and belonging to this line, which they render *Thou wholly emptyest thy quiver*, and take *thy bow* into the next line. But all this is far-fetched.

³ *שְׁבָעוֹת מִפְּוֹת אָמַר*, literally *sworn are staves or rods of speech*.

A.V.: according to the oaths of the tribes, even Thy word. LXX (omitting *שְׁבָעוֹת* and adding *יְהוָה*), ἐπὶ σκηπτρα, λέγει κύριος. These words 'form a riddle which all the ingenuity of scholars has not been able to solve. Delitzsch calculates that a hundred translations of them have been offered' (Davidson). In parallel to the previous *bow*, we might expect *מִפְּוֹת*, *staves*, though not elsewhere used for *shafts* or *arrows*. *שְׁבָעוֹת* may have been *שְׁבָעָה*, *Thou satest*. Cod. Barb. reads: ἐχόρτασας βολίδας τῆς φαρέτρης αὐτοῦ, *Thou hast satiated the shafts of his quiver*. Sinker: *sworn are the punishments of the solemn decree*, and compares Isa. xi. 4, *the rod of His mouth*; xxx. 32, *rod of doom*. Ewald: *sevenfold shafts of war*. But cf. Psalm cxviii. 12.

⁴ Uncertain, but a more natural result of cleaving than *the rivers Thou cleavest into dry land* (Davidson and Wellhausen).

⁵ But Ewald takes this as of the Red Sea floods sweeping on the Egyptians: lit. *flood of waters passes on*. Some read with Psalm lxxvii. 18, *the clouds pour water*.

iii. 10. *The Deep gives forth his voice,
He lifts his roar upon high.*¹

11. *Sun and moon stand still in their dwelling,
At the flash of Thy shafts as they speed,
At the sheen of the lightning, Thy lance.*

12. *In wrath Thou stridest the earth,
In anger Thou threshes the nations !*

13. *Thou art forth to the help of Thy people,
To save Thine anointed.²
Thou smashest the head from the house of the
wicked,³*

*Laying bare the foundation to the rock (?)*⁴

14. *Hast pierced with Thy shafts the head of his
princes.⁵*

*Who stormed forth to crush me ;
Their triumph to devour the humble in hiding.⁶*

15. *Thou hast marched on the sea with Thy horses ;
Foamed⁷ the great waters.*

¹ רום ידיהו נשא = *he lifts up his hands on high*. But the LXX read מריהו, παντασίας αὐτῆς, and took נשא with the next verse. The reading מריהו (for מראיהו) is indeed nonsense, but suggests an emendation to מזרהו, *his shout or wail*: cf. Amos vi. 7, Jer. xvi. 5. Nowack, bringing in the first word of the next line, reads נָשָׂא שָׁמֶשׁ, *the sun forgets his rising*.

² Reading for הושיע ישע, required by the acc. following. *Thine anointed*, lit. *Thy Messiah*, according to Isa. xl. ff. the whole people.

³ Some omit *the head from*, others *the house of* as overloading the line.

⁴ Heb. יסוד, *foundation*. LXX, bonds. *Rock* is suggested instead of Heb. *neck*. Some suggest *laying bare from foundation to neck*, but this is mixed unless *neck* happened to be a technical name for a part of a building: cf. Isa. viii. 8, xxx. 28.

⁵ Heb. *his spears or staves ; his own* (Von Orelli). LXX, ἐν ἐκσπιδει; see Sinker, pp. 56 ff. *Princes*: פְּרָזו only here. Hitzig: *his brave ones*. Ewald, Wellhausen, Davidson: *his princes*. Delitzsch: *his hosts*. LXX, κεφαλὰς δυναστών.

⁶ So Heb. A difficult line. On LXX see Sinker, pp. 60 f.

⁷ For חָמַר, *heap* (so A.V.), read some part of חָמַר, *to foam*. LXX, ῥαπάσσοντας; cf. Psalm xlii. 4.

16. *I hear, and my heart¹ is shaken ;
At the sound my lips are quivering,²
Rottenness enters my bones,³
And under me tremble my steps.⁴
I wait for⁵ the day of distress,
To come up on the folk that invades me.⁶*
17. *Though the fig-tree do not blossom,⁷
And no fruit be on the vines,
Fail the produce of the olive,
And the fields yield no meat,
Cut off⁸ be the flock from the fold,
And no cattle be in the stalls,*
18. *Yet I in Yahweh will exult,
Will rejoice in the God of my salvation.*
19. *Yahweh, the Lord, is my might ;
He hath made my feet like the hinds',
And on the heights⁹ He gives me to march.¹⁰*

¹ So LXX Ν (some codd.), softening the original belly.

² Or *my lips quiver aloud*—לקול, vocally (Von Orelli).

³ By the Hebrew the bones were felt, as a modern man feels his nerves : Psalms xxxii, li ; Job.

⁴ For אשר, for which LXX gives ἡ ἐξίς μου, read אשרי, *my steps* ; and for ארנך, LXX ἐπαράχθη, ירנך.

⁵ אָנֹכָה. LXX ἀναπαύσομαι, *I will rest*. A.V. : *that I might rest in the day of trouble*. Others : *I will wait for*. Wellhausen suggests אָנֹכָה (Isa. i. 24), *I will take comfort*. Sinker takes אשר as the simple relative : *I who will wait patiently for the day of doom*. Von Orelli takes it as the conjunction *because*.

⁶ So LXX ; Heb. יִתְבָּרֵן, *it invades, or brings up troops on, them*—only in Gen. xlix. 19 and here. Wellhausen : *which invades us*.

⁷ תפרח ; but LXX תפריה, οὐ καρποφορήσει, *bear no fruit*.

⁸ For נֹר Wellhausen rightly reads נָזֹר. LXX ἐξέλιπεν.

⁹ So LXX ; Heb. *my heights*.

¹⁰ The colophon : *To the choir leader for string-music*.

This Psalm, whose musical signs prove it to have been employed in the liturgy of the Jewish Temple, has largely entered the use of the Christian Church. The vivid style, the sweep of vision, the exultation in the extreme of adversity with which it closes, have made it a frequent theme of preachers and of poets. St. Augustine's exposition of the Greek version spiritualises almost every clause into a description of the first and second advents of Christ.¹ Calvin's more sober and accurate learning interprets it of God's guidance of Israel from the Egyptian plagues to the days of Joshua and Gideon, and enforces the lesson that He who delivered His people in their youth will not forsake them in midway of their career.² The closing verses have been torn from the rest to form the essence of a number of hymns in many languages.

For ourselves it is useful to fasten upon the poet's description of his position in the midst of the years, and like him to take heart, amid similar circumstances, from the story of God's ancient revelation, in the faith that He is still the same in might and in purpose of grace to His people. We, too, live among the nameless years. We feel them about us, undistinguished by manifest workings of God, slow and petty, or, at the most, full of inarticulate turmoil. Sometimes we suffer from the frustration of a great cause, on which believing men had set their hearts as God's cause. Or, lifting our eyes to a wider horizon, we are tempted to see a wide, flat waste of years. It is nearly nineteen centuries since the revelation of God in Christ, the redemption of mankind, and the wonders of the Early Church. We are far from that, and unstirred by the

¹ *De Civitate Dei*, XVIII, 32.

² So he paraphrases *in the midst of the years*.

expectation of any crisis in the near future. We stand *in the midst of the years*, equally distant from beginning and from end. It is the situation which Jesus likened to the long double watch in the middle of the night—*if he come in the second watch or in the third watch*—against whose dulness He warned His disciples. How much need is there to recall, like this poet, what God has done—how often He has shaken the world and overturned nations, for the sake of His people and the Divine causes they represent. *His ways are everlasting*. As He then worked, so He will work now for redemption. Our prayer for *a revival of His work* will be answered as soon as it is spoken.

Probably much of our sense of the staleness of the years once came from their prosperity. The dull feeling that time is mere routine is fastened upon us by nothing more firmly than by the constant round of fruitful seasons—that fortification of comfort, that regularity of material supplies, which modern life assures to so many. Adversity would brace us, as it has since the Great War began, to a new expectation of the near action of our God. This is perhaps the meaning of the mention of natural plagues in the seventeenth verse of our Psalm. Not in spite of misfortune, but because of it, should we exult in *the God of our salvation*; and realise that by discipline He makes His Church feel she is not marching over the dreary levels of nameless years, but *on high places He makes us to march*.

‘ Grant, Almighty God, as the dulness and hardness of our flesh is so great that it is needful for us to be in various ways afflicted—grant that we patiently bear Thy chastisement, and under deep sorrow flee to Thy mercy displayed to us in Christ, so that we depend not on the earthly blessings of this perishable life, but

relying on Thy word go forward in the course of our calling, until at length we be gathered to that blessed rest which is laid up for us in heaven, through Christ our Lord. Amen.'¹

¹ From the prayer with which Calvin concludes his exposition of **Habakkuk**.

OBADIAH

*And Saviours shall come up on Mount Sion to judge Mount
Esau, and the kingdom shall be Yahweh's.*

CHAPTER XIII

THE BOOK OF OBADIAH

THE Book of Obadiah is the smallest among the prophets, the smallest in the Old Testament. Yet no other better illustrates many problems of Old Testament criticism. It raises, indeed, no doctrinal issue nor question of historical accuracy. All it claims to be is *The Vision of Obadiah*; ¹ and this vague name, with no date or place to compare with the contents of the book, introduces us without prejudice to the

¹ עֲבַדְיָה, 'Obadyah, the later form of עֲבַדְיָהּ, 'Obadyahu (a name occurring thrice before the Exile—Ahab's steward, 1 Kings xviii. 3-7, 16; a man in David's house, 1 Chron. xxvii. 19; a Levite under Josiah, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 12)—is the name of several Jews who returned from exile: Ezra viii. 9, son of Jehi'el (1 Esdras viii. 'Aḇadīas); Neh. x. 6, a priest, probably the same as in xii. 25, a porter, and עֲבֶדָה, the singer, xi. 17, called עֲבַדְיָה in 1 Chron. ix. 16. Another 'Obadyah is given in the eleventh generation from Saul, 1 Chron. viii. 38, ix. 44; another of the royal line in the Exile, iii. 21; a man of Issachar, vii. 3; a Gadite under David, xii. 9; a prince under Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xvii. 7. With the Massoretic points עֲבַדְיָה means worshipper of Yahweh: cf. Obed-Edom, and so in the Greek form, 'Οἰδῆϊον, of Cod. B. But other Codd., A, θ and Ν, give 'Αβδίου or 'Αδδείου, and this, with the alternative Hebrew form אֲבִדָּה of Neh. xi. 17, suggests rather עֲבֶד יְהוָה, servant of Yahweh.

The name as given in the title is probably intended to be that of an historical individual, as in the titles of other books; but which, or if any, of the above it is impossible to say. Note that it is the post-exilic form of the name that is used, in spite of the book occurring among pre-exilic prophets. Some, less probably, take the name Obadyah to be symbolic of the prophetic character of the writer.

criticism of the latter. Nor is the book involved in the central controversy of Old Testament scholarship, the date of the Law. It does not refer to the Law. Nor is it used in the New Testament. The more freely may we study the literary and historical questions started by the twenty-one verses which compose the book. Their brief course is broken by differences of style, and sudden changes of outlook from the past to the future. Some present a close parallel to another passage of prophecy, a feature which is always a difficult problem. Hardly any of the historical allusions are free from ambiguity, for although the book refers throughout to a single nation—and so vividly that even if Edom were not named we might still discern the character and crimes of that bitter brother of Israel—yet the conflict of Israel and Edom was so prolonged and monotonous in its cruelties, that there are few of its many centuries to which some scholar has not felt able to assign, in part or whole, Obadiah's indignant oration. The little book has been tossed out of one century into another by successive critics, till there exists in their estimates of its date a difference of nearly six hundred years.¹ Such a fact seems, at first sight, to convict criticism of arbitrariness or helplessness; ² yet a little consideration of details is enough to lead us to appreciate the reasonable methods of Old Testament criticism, and its progress towards certainty, in spite of our ignorance of stretches of the history of Israel. To the student of the Old Testament nothing could be more profitable than to master the historical and literary questions raised by the book, before following them through the more complicated problems

¹ 889 B.C., Hofmann, Keil, etc.; and soon after 312, Hitzig.

² Cf. the extraordinary tirade of Pusey in his *Introd. to Obadiah*.

started by other prophetical books in their relation to the Law of Israel, or to their titles, or to claims made for them in the New Testament.

The Book of Obadiah contains some verbal parallels to a prophecy against Edom in Jeremiah xlix. 7-22. When most critics regarded this prophecy of Jeremiah as genuine, and assigned it to the year 604 B.C., the question arose whether Obadiah's or Jeremiah's was the earlier. Hitzig and Vatke¹ answered in favour of Jeremiah; and as the Book of Obadiah also contains a description of Edom's conduct in the day of Jerusalem's overthrow by Nebuchadrezzar, in 586, they brought the whole book down to the Exile or even later. Strong arguments, however, were offered for Obadiah's priority.² Upon this priority, as well as on the facts that Joel, whom they took to be early, quotes from Obadiah, and that Obadiah's book occurs among the first six—presumably the pre-exilic members—of the Twelve, a number of scholars assigned all of it to

¹ The first in *Die Zwölf Kleine Propheten*: the other in his *Einleitung*.

² Caspari (*Der Proph. Ob. ausgelegt*, 1842), Ewald, Graf, Pusey, Driver, Giesebrecht, Wildeboer and König. Cf. Jer. xlix. 9 with Ob. 5; Jer. xlix. 14 ff. with Ob. 1-4. The opening of Ob. 1 ff. is held to be more in its place than in the middle of Jeremiah's passage. The language of Obadiah is 'terser and more forcible. Jeremiah seems to expand Obadiah, and parts of Jeremiah which have no parallel in Obadiah are like Obadiah's own style' (Driver). This is enforced by Pusey: 'Out of the sixteen verses of which the prophecy of Jeremiah against Edom consists, four are identical with those of Obadiah; a fifth embodies a verse of Obadiah's; of the eleven which remain ten have some turns of expression or idioms which occur in Jeremiah, either in his prophecies against foreign nations or in his prophecies generally. Now it would be wholly improbable that a prophet, selecting verses out of the prophecy of Jeremiah, should have selected precisely those which contain none of Jeremiah's characteristic expressions; whereas it perfectly fits in with the supposition that Jeremiah interwove verses of Obadiah with his own prophecy, that in verses so interwoven there is not one expression which occurs elsewhere in Jeremiah.' Similarly Nowack, 1897.

an early period in Israel's history. Some fixed on the reign of Jehoshaphat, when Judah was invaded by Edom and his allies Moab and Ammon, but saved from disaster through Moab and Ammon turning upon the Edomites and slaughtering them.¹ To this they referred the phrase in Obadiah 9, *the men of thy covenant have betrayed thee*. Others placed the book in the reign of Joram of Judah (849-842 B.C.), when, according to the Chronicles,² Judah was invaded and Jerusalem partly sacked by Philistines and Arabs.³ But in the story of this invasion there is no mention of Edom, and the argument drawn from Joel's quotation of Obadiah fails if Joel be of late date. With greater prudence Pusey declined to fix a period.

The supporters of a pre-exilic origin for the *whole* Book of Obadiah had to explain vv. 11-14, which appear to reflect Edom's conduct at the sack of Jerusalem by Nebuchadrezzar in 586, and they did so in two ways. Pusey took the verses as predictive of Nebuchadrezzar's siege. Orelli and others believed that they suit better the conquest and plunder of the city in the time of Jehoram. But, as Calvin has said, 'they seem to be mistaken who think that Obadiah lived before the time of Isaiah.' He assumes the Book to be from the time of the Exile.

But the question early arose whether it be possible to take Obadiah as a unity. Vv. 1-9 are more vigorous and firm than 10-21. In 1-9 Edom is destroyed by its allies; in 10-21 it is still to fall with other Gentiles in the general judgement of the Lord.⁴ Vv. 10-21

¹ 2 Chron. xx.

² *Ibid.*, xxi. 14-17.

³ So Delitzsch, Keil, Volck in Herzog's *Real-Ency.*, Orelli, Kirkpatrick. Delitzsch suggests that the prophet may be *Obadiah the prince* appointed by Jehoshaphat *to teach in the cities of Judah*.

⁴ Driver, *Intro.*

describe the conduct of the Edomites at the overthrow of Jerusalem in 586; but 1-9 might reflect earlier events; and it was thought significant that in them alone occur the parallels to the prophecy against Edom in Jeremiah, which was then assigned to 604. On some of these grounds Ewald regarded the Book as consisting of two pieces, both of which refer to Edom, but the first was written before Jeremiah, and the second is post-exilic. As the prophecy in Jeremiah has features more original than Obadiah's,¹ he traced both to an earlier oracle against Edom, of which Obadiah on the whole renders an exact version. He fixed the date of this oracle in the early days of Isaiah, when Rezin of Syria enabled Edom to assert again its independence of Judah, and Edom won back Elath, which Uzziah had taken.² Driver, Wildeboer and Cornill³ adopted this theory, save for the period to which Ewald refers the original oracle. According to them, the Book of Obadiah consists of two pieces, vv. 1-9 pre-exilic, and 10-21 post-exilic and descriptive in 11-14 of Nebuchadrezzar's sack of Jerusalem.

This latter point need not be contested.⁴ But are 1-9 so different from 10-21 that they must be assigned to another period? Wellhausen thinks not, and has constructed another theory of the origin of the Book, which, like Vatke's, brings it all down to after the Exile.

¹ Jer. xlix. 9 and 16 seem more original than Ob. 5 and 3b. Notice in Jer. xlix. 16 תפלצתך, which Obadiah omits.

² 2 Kings xiv. 22; xvi. 6, Revised Version margin.

³ *Eint.*³, pp. 185 f.: 'In any case Obadiah 1-9 are older than the fourth year of Jehoiakim.'

⁴ 'That the verses Obadiah 10 ff. refer to this event (the sack of Jerusalem) will always remain the most natural supposition, for the description which they give so completely suits that time that it is not possible to take any other explanation into consideration.' Such is the opinion of practically all recent critics.

There is no mention in the Book of Assyria or Babylonia.¹ The allies who betrayed Edom (ver. 7) are probably those Arabian tribes who surrounded it and were its frequent confederates.² They are described as *sending* Edom to the border (*ib.*). Wellhausen thinks this can only refer to the northward movement of Arabs which began to press upon the fertile lands to the south-east of Israel during the Captivity. Ezekiel³ prophesies that Ammon and Moab will disappear before the Arabs, and we know that by the year 312 the latter were firmly settled in the territories of Edom.⁴ Shortly before this the Hagarenes appear in Chronicles, and Se'ir is called by the Arabic name Gebal,⁵ while as early as the fifth century 'Malachi'⁶ records the desolation of Edom's territory by the *jackals of the wilderness*, and the expulsion of the Edomites, who will not return. The Edomites were pushed up into the Negeb of Israel, and held the territory round, and south of, Hebron till their conquest by John Hyrcanus about 130; even after that it was called Idumæa.⁷ Wellhausen would assign Obadiah 1-7 to the same stage of this movement as is reflected in 'Malachi' i. 1-5; and, apart from certain parentheses, would take the whole of Obadiah as a unity from the end of the fifth century before Christ. In that case Giesebrecht argued that the

¹ Edom paid tribute to Sennacherib in 701, and to Asarhaddon (681-669). According to 2 Kings xxiv. 2 Nebuchadrezzar sent Ammonites, Moabites and Edomites [for ארם read אדום] against Jehoiakim, who had broken his oath to Babylonia.

² For Edom's alliances with Arab tribes cf. Gen. xxv. 13 with xxxvi. 3, 12, etc.

³ Ezek. xxv. 4, 5, 10.

⁴ Diod. Sic. XIX, 94. Earlier they are described as possessing Iturea, on the S.E. slopes of Anti-Lebanon (Arrian II, 20, 4).

⁵ Psalm lxxxiii. 8.

⁶ i. 1-5.

⁷ *E.g.* in the N.T.: Mark iii. 8.

parallel, Jeremiah xlix. 7-22, must be reckoned as one of the passages of the Book of Jeremiah in which are post-exilic additions.¹

Our criticism of this theory may start from the seventh verse of Obadiah: *To the border they have sent thee, all the men of thy covenant have betrayed thee, they have overpowered thee, the men of thy peace.* On our knowledge of the history of Edom it is impossible to assign the first of these clauses to before the Exile. No doubt in earlier days Edom was more than once subjected to Arab *razzias*. But till the Jewish Exile the Edomites still occupied their own land. So the Deuteronomist² implies, and Ezekiel³ and perhaps the author of Lamentations.⁴ Wellhausen's claim, therefore, that the seventh verse of Obadiah refers to the expulsion of Edomites by Arabs in the sixth or fifth century B.C. may be granted.⁵ But does this mean that vv. 1-6 belong, as he maintains, to the same period? The question might be answered in the negative could we be sure that the parallel passage, Jeremiah xlix. 7 ff., is by Jeremiah himself⁶ and from 604 B.C. In that case the exilic or post-exilic portion of Obadiah might be taken to begin with ver. 7, and vv. 1-6 as a pre-exilic prophecy against Edom. Such was the conclusion I came to in the first edition of this volume in 1898. But since then it has become

¹ So too Nowack, 1897.

² Deut. ii. 5, 8, 12.

³ Ezek. xxxv., esp. 2 and 15.

⁴ iv. 21: yet *Uz* fails in LXX, and some take *אֶרֶץ* to refer to the Holy Land itself. Buhl, *Gesch. der Edomiter*, 73.

⁵ It can hardly be supposed that Edom's treacherous allies were Assyrians or Babylonians, for even if the phrase *men of thy covenant* could be applied to those to whom Edom was tributary, the Assyrian or Babylonian method of dealing with conquered peoples is described by saying that they took them off into captivity, not that they *sent them to the border*.

⁶ So even Cornill, *Eintl.*³.

probable that Jeremiah xlix. 7 ff. is not by Jeremiah. Thus the question of the date of Obadiah 1-6 remains open. Vv. 7 onwards were indubitably written after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadrezzar. The vividness of 10-14 describing the attitude of Edom on that occasion has suggested to some that the prophet speaks as an eye-witness and soon after the event. Of the verses referring to the fall of Edom some, 8, 10, 15b, 18, seem to speak of it as still future (as 4 has already done), while another, 7, fixes it as past (as 6 has done), which latter has therefore been taken as from the end of the fifth or from the fourth century B.C.,¹ while the former are either emended or considered as glosses. Yet ver. 17 appears to assume that Israel are still in exile. The question is complicated, of course, by the usual ambiguity of the prophets' use of the Hebrew tenses. The uncertainty is shown by the following criticisms and rearrangements of the text which have appeared since this volume was written :—

In 1897 Nowack² took vv. 1-14 (save for additions in 1, 5 f., 8 f. and 12) to be from a date not long after the Fall of Jerusalem, referred to in vv. 11-14, and vv. 15-21 to belong to a later period impossible to fix. For the views of W. R. Smith and Cheyne (who introduces as usual his favourite Jerahmeelites, Ishmaelites, Mišrites and Rehobothites) see in *Encyclopædia Biblica* (1902) the article 'Obadiah.' In 1904 Marti³ distinguished the following parts: (1) the oldest, embracing vv. 1-5, 4 lines of 7, 10-14, 15b to be dated, with Wellhausen and a later edition of Nowack, in the first half of the fifth century, a little earlier than 'Malachi,' and assigned to a prophet called Obadiah, for the title *Vision of Obadiah* may well belong to the 'Grundstock' of the Book (6 being a gloss); (2) an addition, vv. 16-21, from the third or more probably the second century; (3) a little later a third hand inserted vv. 8, 9,

¹ See above, p. 168, nn. 2-6.

² *Die kleinen Propheten, Handkommentar z. A.T.*

³ *Dodekapropheton*, pp. 228 ff.

15*a* to signify that 1-7 as well as 16-21 are to be understood of The Day of Yahweh. In 1905 McFadyen¹ dated vv. 1-7, 10-14, 15*b* from about 500 B.C., the memory of Edom's cruelty still ranking in the Jews after their return (vv. 8, 9, implying that Edom's doom is still future, being a later addition), and took 15*a*, 16-21 as expressing 'the bold eschatological hopes of a later time'; it is Jer. xlix which utilises Obadiah. In 1906 Budde² divided the Book into three closely similar parts: (1) vv. 1-7, containing the threat of doom to Edom 'in the narrower sense'; 'a worse parallel to Jer. xlix, and simply lifted out of the completed Book of Jeremiah'; (2) vv. 10-14 (with 15*b*), attached to 1-7 by a fresh threat of doom in 8, 9, give as the reason for this Edom's treatment of Judah; (3) vv. 15*a*, 16-21 blend Edom's fate with judgement on the whole heathen world and the accompanying deliverance of Israel, No. (2) is 'a right wooden conception of the indictments of Edom,' and No. (3) 'a more general prophetic picture of the future akin to Isaiah xi, Joel iv, Zephaniah iii, and directly adapted to Edom.' In 1906 also J. M. P. Smith,³ on metrical grounds divided the Book into three parts, differing in form, point of view, and spirit: (1) 1-7*c*, 10 f., 15*b*, five six-line trimeter strophes; (2) 12-14, one six-line, Kinah; (3) 15*a*, 16-21, three strophes of 4, 8 and 8 lines varying between trimeter and tetrameter; besides 8 f. a stanza of 5 lines. In 1907 Cornill⁴ saw with Wellhausen the original edition of the Book in vv. 1-5, 7 (partly), 10 f., 13 f., 15*b*, from the first half of the fifth century; the object of the revised form (which cannot be dated) being to expand the contemporary catastrophe of Edom into a world judgement. In 1911 Duhm⁵ (taking the title as very late) discerned in vv. 1-14, 15*b* fourteen four-lined stanzas with lines of alternately three and two beats, a poem which must have been written not very long after the sack of Jerusalem, perhaps in the sixth century; insertions are 3*b*, the words *no understanding in him* or *it* in 7*b*, and the unmetrical 8 f.; vv. 15*a*, 16-21 are a prosaic addition from the time of the Maccabees (who are the *saviours* of 21), but

¹ *An Introduction to the O.T.*

² *Gesch. der althebr. Litt.*, pp. 213 ff.

³ 'The Structure of Obadiah,' in *Amer. Journ. of Semit. Liter.*, xxii.

⁴ Engl. translation of the 4th ed. of his *Einleitung in das A.T.*, pp. 334 ff.

⁵ *Z.A.T.W.*, xxxi, pp. 175 ff.

before the conquest of Idumæa. Also in 1911 J. A. Bewer¹ concluded that in vv. 1-14, 15^b Obadiah quoted an older oracle, vv. 1-4, the original of which (he agrees with Budde) is better preserved in Jer. xlix; vv. 5-7 are partly in the older prophet's words, partly in Obadiah's own, to show that the older prophecy had been fulfilled, to which in 8 f. Obadiah reverts; vv. 5-7 point to his date as being after 'Malachi' in the fifth century; the appendix 15^a, 16-18 is proved by Joel's quotation of 17, some time between 400 and 350, to be before or soon after the beginning of the fourth century; 19-21 point in the same direction and not to the time of the Maccabees, for 19 f. are an expression of hope and not a description of fact. In 1916 A. R. Gordon² agreed that vv. 1-14, 15^b contain a genuine prophecy of Obadiah, 16 opens a new apocalyptic vista of the Day of Yahweh heralded in 15^a, and 19-21 are a commentary on 18 which closes the apocalypse; it is most probable that the material common to Obadiah and Jer. xlix belonged to an earlier oracle of doom on Edom. In 1923 Sellin³ divided the Book into three parts: (1) vv. 1-10, the judgement on Edom, one of the oldest of prophecies in connection with Edom's revolt from Judah under Jehoram, 852 B.C., expanded during or immediately after the Exile by (2) 11-14 so as to refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, and (3) at the period perhaps of Malachi or Joel 'the whole was transformed by the addition of 15-21 into a little apocalypse, in which Edom plays the part elsewhere assigned to "Gog," "the Foe from the North," "the Locusts" and so forth.' Jer. xlix 'obviously borrows from Ob. 1-10, cf. especially xlix. 16 with Ob. 3, 4.' 'Since in the redaction of Jer. xlix only Ob. 1-10 was made use of, and not 11-14, we have reason to assume that the former at the time existed separately and is earlier than 11-14.' Moffatt⁴ takes ver. 1 as prose, reads the tenses of 2 as future, and those of succeeding verses as the prophetic perfect, puts 2-21 in quotation marks, and reads 19-21 as prose. See too Wade (*Westm. Comm.*), xxxii ff.

Such are the many varieties of modern opinion on this little book, all of them possible, though, those

¹ *International Critical Commentary*.

² *The Prophets of the O.T.*, pp. 314 ff.

³ *Introduction to the O.T.*, Engl. transl., pp. 171 f.

⁴ *The O.T., A New Translation*, N.D.

which relegate the later verses to the Maccabean period are by no means probable, but all incapable of absolute proof. It will be observed that judgement is sharply divided on the relation of Obadiah and Jer. xlix to each other. So far as I can judge, I agree with those who give priority to Obadiah. Whether with some Obadiah 1-10 can be put as early as Jehoram of Judah's reign is to me very doubtful. Whatever earlier elements be in the Book, I see no certain traces in the language of Aramaisms or other symptoms of decadence. The text on the whole is sound. The LXX enables us to make a few corrections, offers the probable division between vv. 9 and 10, but makes an omission which leaves no sense in 17, and mistranslates זריר by *πυρόφορος* in 18.

There follows a translation of the twenty-one verses in the sense and order suggested by the criticisms given above.

THE VISION OF OBADIAH

1. *Thus spake the Lord Yahweh of Edom :¹
From Yahweh we² heard a report
And a herald was sent through the nations,
'Up, let us rise to battle against her.'³*
2. *Lo, I make thee the smallest of nations,
Despiséd be thou among men !⁴*

¹ Is this line from the later writer who before giving a new word on Edom quotes the earlier prophecy beginning with the next line? Duhm takes *of Edom* along with the next line, making the first line of the first of the fourteen stanzas into which he divides vv. 1-15.

² So Heb., but LXX and Jer. xlix. 14 read *I*.

³ This line is the herald's summons; *her*, so Heb., LXX, also Jer. xlix. 14, meaning the land of Edom, but some read *him* since Edom or Esau is masculine.

⁴ So in the corresponding line Jer. xlix. 15. Here Heb. reads *Be thou very despised*.

3. *The pride of thine heart has deceived thee,
Thou dweller in clefts of the rock,¹
Exalting² thy home, saying in thine heart,
Who shall bring me down to the earth?*
4. *Though thou build as high as the eagle,
And set thy nest in the stars,
Thence will I bring thee down—Rede of Yahweh*
5. *How art thou utterly undone!³
Had thieves⁴ of a night come into thee,
Would they have stolen more than their need?
Had vine-croppers entered thee,
Would they not have left gleanings?*
6. *How ransacked is Esau,
How rifled his treasures!⁵*
7. *Right to the border they have sent thee,⁶
Thy confederates⁷ all have betrayed thee,
The men of thy peace⁸ overpowered thee,
They kept setting under thee snares (?)⁹*
8. *Shall it not be in that day—Rede of Yahweh—
No intelligence in him,¹⁰*

¹ *Rock*, Heb. sela', the name of Edom's capital, Petra.

² Reading with LXX, Syr., Vulg. מרים for the text's מרום, height or on high.

³ This line is transferred here from a place lower down in ver. 5 in which it is unsuitable, but it is not in LXX, and some omit it.

⁴ Heb. adds *had robbers*.

⁵ Antithetic to *thieves of a night* taking only what they needed. But some hold ver. 6 as a gloss.

⁶ This line seems antithetic to the mere robberies of ver. 5.

⁷ Lit. *men of thy covenant*.

⁸ The text adds *thy bread*, but this, wanting in LXX, is a dittography from the preceding word.

⁹ This line is doubtful. For מזור, *snares*, Marti would read מדור, *dwelling* (Aram. and post-biblical Hebrew), and render *they take dwelling in thy stead*, which is probable.

¹⁰ This line, which in the text is the last of ver. 7, seems to belong rather to 8.

*That I cause the wise to perish from Edom
And intelligence out of Mount Esau.*

9. *And thy heroes, O Teman, shall be affrighted,
So that every man be cut off from Mount Esau.*¹

10. *For the slaughter,² the outrage on Jacob thy brother,
Shame envelops thee, cut off for ever.*

11. *For the day of thy standing aloof,³
When strangers captured his substance
And aliens entered his gates,⁴
And cast the lot on Jerusalem,
Even thou wast as one of them.*

12. *Gloat not⁵ upon the day of thy brother,
The day of his haplessness,⁶
Nor exult thou over the sons of Judah
On the day of their ruin ;
Nor make thy mouth large⁷
On the day of distress.*

13. *Enter not the gate of My people,
On his day of disaster,
Nor gloat—even thou !—on his misery,
His day of disaster,
Nor put forth a hand to his substance
On his day of destruction.*⁸

¹ To several moderns vv. 8 f. are an intrusion, perhaps rightly.

² Transferred here with LXX from end of the previous line.

³ *When thou stoodest on the opposite side*—Calvin.

⁴ So LXX and Keri ; the text has *gate*.

⁵ In vv. 12-14 all the verbs with the negative are imperatives, which A.V. renders throughout by *Thou shouldest not have* (similarly Moffatt and others). This, of course, is the meaning, but the direct bare imperatives are more impressive, as if the speaker were actually face to face with the wanton gloating, laughter and looting by Edom at the sack of Jerusalem. Therefore they are preserved above, and so in R.V.

⁶ Lit. *Day of his strangeness* = *aliena fortuna*.

⁷ That is with laughter, or with big words

⁸ So LXX, ἀπωλείας ; Heb. for fourth time repeats disaster.

Wellhausen and Nowack, etc., suspect ver. 13 as intruded ; Marti

14. *Nor take thy stand at the passes*¹
To cut off his fugitives.
Nor close thou upon his survivors
On the day of distress.
- 15b. *As thou hast done, it shall be done thee,*
*Thy dealings come back on thy head!*²
- 15a. *For near is the day of Yahweh*
Upon all the nations.
16. *As ye have drunk on My Holy Mount,*³
*All nations shall drink sharp wine,*⁴
*And drink and reel*⁵ *and become*
As though they never had been.
17. *But a survival shall be on Mount Sion,*
And inviolate shall it be,
And Jacob's House shall inherit
*Who disinherited them.*⁶
18. *For Jacob's House shall be fire*
And the House of Joseph a flame,
But Esau's House be for stubble ;
They shall kindle upon, and consume, them.
Not one shall escape of Esau's House,
For Yahweh hath spoken.

takes the opening of 12 as a variant to that of 13 and the whole to have formed originally six lines only. But the numerous repetitions make the speaker's hate the more vivid.

¹ Heb. פָּרֶק found only here; means *cleaving*, LXX, διεκβολή, *a pass between mountains*. Arabic forms from the same root suggest *a band apart from the main body on the watch for stragglers*.

² So most since Wellhausen bring this couplet before the next in the text.

³ Some take this as addressed to the speaker's countrymen drinking of the wrath of their God; but others (like Calvin) more probably to Edom as drunk with a banquet of carnage.

⁴ Heb. תָּמִיד, *constantly*, but either read מִיָּדִי, *from my hand*, or better, with some LXX Codd. *wine*, probably חֲמֵר or תִּמְרָה.

⁵ *Reel*—for לָע (with Wellhausen) read נָעַן: Lam. iv. 2.

⁶ So LXX. Heb. *their heritages*.

19. *And the Negeb shall possess Mount Esau, and the Shephelah the Philistines,¹ and the Mountain² shall possess Ephraim and the field of Samaria,³ and Benjamin shall possess Gilead. And the exiles of this host⁴ of the sons of Israel shall possess (?) the land⁵ of the Canaanites unto Sarephath, and the exiles of Jerusalem in Sepharad⁶ shall inherit the cities of the Negeb. Saviours shall come up on Mount Sion to judge Mount Esau, and the kingdom shall be Yahweh's.*

¹ Reverse of conditions after Jews went to exile, for Edomites came on the Negeb and Philistines on the Shephelah.

² Of Judah, the rest of the country outside the Negeb and Shephelah. The reading is after the LXX.

³ Whose pagan inhabitants came on Judæa during the Exile.

⁴ Unusual form. Ewald reads *coast*.

⁵ So LXX.

⁶ Jews thought this Spain: so Onkelos, translating ספרד by נִימְרֹדָא = Hispania. Hence the name Sephardim Jews. The supposition that it is Sparta need not be noticed. Our decision lies between two other regions—in Asia Minor and in S.W. Media. *First*, in the Persian inscriptions there thrice occurs (great Behistun inscription, l. 15; inscription of Darius, ll. 12, 13; inscription of Darius from Naḫsh-i-Rustam) Çparda. It is connected with Janua or Ionia and Katapatuka or Cappadocia (Schrader, *Cun. Inscr. and O.T.*, Germ. ed., p. 446; Eng., Vol. II, p. 145); and Sayce shows that, called Shaparda on a cuneiform inscription of 275 B.C., it lay in Bithynia or Galatia (*Higher Criticism and Monuments*, p. 483). Darius made it a satrapy. It is clear, as Cheyne says (*Founders of O.T. Criticism*, p. 312), that those who on other grounds are convinced of the origin of this part of Obadiah in the Persian period, will identify Sepharad with this Çparda. But to those who hold that this part of Obadiah is from the Babylonian exile, Sepharad cannot be Çparda, for Nebuchadrezzar did not subdue Asia Minor and cannot have transported Jews there. Are they then forced to give up the date of Obadiah 10–21 in the Babylonian exile? Hardly, for *second*, the inscriptions of Sargon (721–705 B.C.) mention a Shaparda, in S.W. Media corresponding to ספרד (Schrader, *l.c.*), and the identification of the two is regarded as ‘exceedingly probable’ by Fried. Delitzsch (*Wo lag das Paradies?* p. 249). If this is impossible, and if Sepharad = Çparda, that would not alter the opinion as to the date of Obadiah 10–21, for later additions, including Sepharad, may have been made to the passage.

CHAPTER XIV

EDOM AND ISRAEL

OBADIAH 1-21

IF the Book of Obadiah presents the most difficult questions of criticism, it raises besides one of the hardest ethical problems in the history of Israel.

Israel's fate has been to work out their calling in the world through antipathies rather than by sympathies, but of all the antipathies which the nation experienced none was more bitter and constant than that towards Edom. The rest of Israel's enemies rose and fell like waves: Canaanites succeeded by Philistines, Philistines by Syrians, Syrians by Greeks. Tyrant relinquished his grasp of God's people to tyrant: Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian; the Seleucids, the Ptolemies. But Edom was always there, *and fretted his anger for ever*.¹ From that far day when their ancestors wrestled in the womb of Rebekah to the eve of the Christian era, when a Jewish king² dragged the Idumeans beneath the yoke of the Law, the two peoples scorned and scourged each other with a relentlessness that finds no analogy, between kindred and neighbour nations, elsewhere in history. About 1030 David, about 130 the Hasmoneans, were equally

¹ Amos i. 11. See Vol. I, p. 129.

² John Hyrcanus, about 130 B.C.

at war with Edom ; and few are the prophets between those distant dates who do not cry for vengeance against him or exult in his overthrow. The Book of Obadiah is singular, that it contains nothing else than such feelings and cries. It brings no spiritual message. It speaks no word of sin, or righteousness, or mercy, but only doom upon Edom in resentment at his cruelties, and in exultation that, as he helped to disinherit Israel, Israel shall disinherit him. Such a book seems but a dark surge staining the stream of revelation, as if to exhibit through what a muddy channel these sacred waters have been poured upon the world. Is the book only an outbreak of Israel's selfish patriotism ? This is the question we have to discuss.

Reasons for the hostility of Edom and Israel are not far to seek. The two nations were neighbours with bitter memories and rival interests. Each of them was possessed by a sense of distinction from the rest of mankind, which goes far to justify the story of their common descent. But while in Israel this pride was chiefly due to the consciousness of a destiny not realised—a pride painful and hungry—in Edom it took the form of satisfaction in a territory of remarkable isolation and self-sufficiency, in stores of wealth, and in a reputation for worldly wisdom—a fulness that recked little of the future.

The purple mountains, into which the wild sons of Esau clambered, run out from Syria upon the desert, some hundred miles by twenty of porphyry and red sandstone. They are said to be the finest rock scenery in the world. 'Salvator Rosa never conceived so savage and so suitable a haunt for banditti.'¹ From Mount Hor, their summit, you look down upon a maze

Irby and Mangles' *Travels* : cf. Burckhardt's *Travels in Syria*, and Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, I.

of mountains, cliffs, chasms, rocky shelves and strips of valley. On the east the range is the crested edge of a high, cold plateau, covered mostly by stones, but with stretches of corn land and scattered woods. The western walls, on the contrary, spring steep and bare, black and red, from the yellow of the desert 'Arabah. The interior is reached by defiles, so narrow that two horsemen may scarcely ride abreast, and the sun is shut out by overhanging rocks. Eagles, hawks and other mountain birds fly screaming round the traveller. Little else than wild-fowls' nests are the villages; human eyries perched on shelves or hidden in caves at the ends of deep gorges. There is abundance of water. The gorges are filled with tamarisks, oleanders and wild figs. Besides the wheat lands on the eastern plateau, the wider defiles hold fertile fields and terraces for the vine. Mount Esau is no mere citadel with supplies for a limited siege, but a fairly stocked, well-watered country, full of food and lusty men, yet lifted so high, and locked so fast by precipice and slippery mountain, that it calls for little trouble of defence. *Dweller in the clefts of the rock, he has raised aloft his habitation, that says in his heart: Who shall bring me down to earth?*¹

On this fortress-land the Edomites enjoyed a civilisation above that of the tribes who swarmed on the surrounding deserts; and at the same time they were cut off from the lands of those Syrian nations who were their equals in culture and descent. When Edom looked out, he looked *down* and *across*—down upon the Arabs, whom his position enabled him to rule with a loose hand, and across at his brothers in Palestine, forced by more open territories to make alliances with

¹ Obadiah 3.

and against each other, from which he could afford to hold himself free. That alone was bound to exasperate them. In Edom himself it appears to have bred a want of sympathy, a habit of keeping to himself and ignoring the claims of pity and of kinship—with which he is charged by the prophets. *He corrupted his natural feelings, and guarded his passion for ever.*¹ *Thou stoodest aloof!*²

This self-sufficiency was aggravated by the position of the country among several of the main routes of ancient trade. The masters of Mount Se'ir held the harbours of 'Akaba, into which the gold ships came from Ophir. They intercepted the Arabian caravans and cut the roads to Gaza and Damascus. Petra, in the heart of Edom, was later the capital of the Nabatean kingdom, whose commerce rivalled that of Phœnicia, scattering its inscriptions from Teyma in Central Arabia up to the gates of Rome.³ The earlier Edomites were also traders, middlemen between Arabia and the Phœnicians; and they filled their caverns with wealth both from East and from West.⁴ There can be little doubt that this first drew the envious hand of Israel upon a land so cut off from their own and difficult of invasion. Hear the ancient prophet whose words Obadiah has borrowed: *How searched out is Esau, and his hidden treasures rifled!*⁵ But the same is clear from the history. Solomon, Jehoshaphat, Amaziah, Uzziah and other Jewish invaders of Edom were ambitious to command the Eastern trade through Elath and Ezion-geber. For this it was necessary to subdue Edom; and the frequent reduction of the country to a vassal state, with the

¹ Amos i. 11 : cf. Ezek. xxxv. 5.

² Obadiah 10.

³ C.I.S., II, i. 183 ff.

⁴ Obadiah 6.

⁵ Ver. 6.

revolts in which it broke free, were accompanied by cruelties upon both sides.¹ Every century increased the tale of bitter memories between the brothers, and added the horrors of a war of revenge to those of a war for gold.

The deepest springs of their hate, however, bubbled in their blood. In genius, temper and ambition, the two peoples were of opposite extremes. It is singular that we never hear in the Old Testament of the Edomite gods. Israel fell under the fascination of other neighbouring idolatries, but does not mention that Edom had a religion. Such silence cannot be accidental, and the inference it suggests is confirmed by the picture drawn of Esau himself. Esau is a *profane person*;² with no conscience of a birthright, no faith in the future, no capacity for vision; dead to the unseen, and clamouring only for the satisfaction of his appetites. The same was probably the character of his descendants; who had, of course, their own gods, like every other people in that Semitic world,³ but were essentially irreligious, living for food, spoil and vengeance—a people who deserved even more than the Philistines to have their name descend as a symbol of hardness and obscurantism. It is no contradiction to this that the one intellectual quality imputed to the Edomites should be that of shrewdness and a wisdom obviously worldly. *The wise men of Edom, the cleverness of Mount Esau*⁴ were notorious. It is the race

¹ See Vol. I, pp. 128 f.

² Heb. xii. 16.

³ We know the names of some of these deities from the theophorous names of Edomites: e.g. Baal-chanan (Gen. xxxvi. 38), Hadad (*ib.* 35; 1 Kings xi. 14 ff.); Malikram, Kausmalaka, Kausgabri (on Assyrian inscriptions: Schrader, *K.A.T.*², 150, 613); Κοσαδαρος, Κοσβαρος, Κοσγηρος, Κοσναταρος (*Rev. archéol.*, 1870, I, pp. 109 ff., 170 ff.), Κοστροβαρος, (Jos., XV *Ant.*, vii. 9). See Baethgen, *Beiträge zur Semit. Rel. Gesch.*, pp. 10 ff.

⁴ Obadiah 8: cf. Jer. xlix. 7.

which has given to history only the Herods—clever, scheming, ruthless statesmen, as able as false and bitter, as shrewd in policy as destitute of ideals. *That fox*, cried Christ, and crying stamped the race.

But of such a national character Israel was in all points, save that of cunning, essentially the reverse. Who had such a passion for the ideal? Who such a hunger for the future, such hopes or visions? Never more than in the day of their prostration, when Jerusalem fell in ruins, did they feel and hate the hardness of the brother, who *stood aloof* and *made large his mouth*.¹

It is, therefore, no mere passion for revenge which inspires these few, hot verses of Obadiah. No doubt bitter memories rankle in him. He eagerly repeats² the feeling of a day when Israel matched Edom in cruelty and was cruel for the sake of gold, when Judah's kings coveted Esau's treasures. No doubt there is exultation in the news he hears, that these treasures have been rifled by others; that the cleverness of this proud people has not availed against treacherous allies; and that it has been sent packing to its borders.³ But beneath such tempers, there beats the heart which has fought and suffered for the highest things, and now in its martyrdom sees them baffled and mocked by a people without vision or feeling. Justice, mercy and truth; the education of humanity in the law of God, the establishment of His will upon earth—these things are not mentioned in the Book of Obadiah, but it is for the sake of some instinct of them that wrath is poured upon foes whose treachery and malice seek to make them impossible by destroying the one people on earth who then believed and

¹ Obadiah 11, 12: cf. Ezek. xxxv. 12 f.

² See above, pp. 167 ff.

³ Ver. 7.

lived for them. Consider the situation. It was the darkest hour of Israel's history. City and Temple had fallen, the people had been carried away. Up over the empty land the waves of mocking heathen had flowed ; there was none to beat them back. A Jew who may have lived through these things, may have seen ¹ Jerusalem fall and passed from her ruins under the mocking of her foes, dared to cry back into the large mouths they made : Our day is not spent ; we shall return with the things we live for ; the land shall be ours, and the kingdom our God's.

Brave, hot heart ! It shall be as thou sayest. But in exile thy people have first to learn many more things about the heathen than they can now feel. Mix with them. Learn what the world is, and that more beautiful and more possible than the narrow rule thou hast promised to Israel over her neighbours shall be that world-wide service of man, of which others of thy people are dreaming.

The Book of Obadiah, part of it reflecting the beginning of the Exile, and the prophecy of the Servant of the Lord at the end of the Exile—how true was his word who said : *He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.*

The subsequent history of Israel and Edom may be quickly traced. When the Jews returned from exile they found Edomites in possession of all the Negeb, and of the Mountain of Judah far north of Hebron. The old warfare was resumed, and not till 130 B.C. (as has been said) did a Jewish king bring the old enemies of his people beneath the Law of Israel.

¹ See above, p. 170.

Jewish scribes transferred the name of Edom to Rome, as if the perpetual symbol of that hostility of the heathen world, against which Israel had to work out her calling as the peculiar people of God. Yet Israel had not done with the Edomites themselves. Never did she encounter foes more dangerous to her higher interests than in her Idumean dynasty of the Herods ; while the savage relentlessness of certain Edomites in the struggles against Rome proved that the fire which had scorched her borders for a thousand years, now burned a fatal flame within her. More than anything else, this Edomite fanaticism provoked the suicide of Israel, which beginning in Galilee was consummated upon the rocks of Masada, half-way between Jerusalem and Mount Esau.



INTRODUCTION TO THE PROPHETS OF THE
PERSIAN PERIOD

(539-331 B.C.)

'The exiles returned from Babylon to found not a kingdom but a church.'

—KIRKPATRICK.

'Israel is no longer a kingdom, but a colony' (p. 189).

CHAPTER XV

ISRAEL UNDER THE PERSIANS

(539–331 B.C.)

THE next group of the Twelve Prophets—Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi and perhaps Joel—fall within the period of the Persian Empire. The Persian Empire was founded on the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus in 539 B.C., and it fell in the defeat of Darius III by Alexander at the battle of Arbela, in 331. The period is thus one of a little more than two centuries.

During this time Israel were the subjects of the Persian monarchs, and closely bound to them and their civilisation. They owed them their liberty and revival as a separate community upon its own land. The Jewish State—if we may give that title to what is more truly described as a Congregation or Commune—was part of an empire which stretched from the Ægean to the Indus, and the provinces of which were held in intercourse by the first system of roads and posts that ever brought different races together. Jews were scattered almost everywhere across this empire. A number still remained in Babylon, and there were many at Susa and Ecbatana, two of the royal capitals. Most of these were subject to the influence of Aryan manners and religion; some were members of the Persian Court and had access to the Royal Presence. In the Delta of Egypt were Jewish settlements, and Jews were found also throughout Syria and along the

coasts, at least, of Asia Minor. Here they touched another civilisation, destined to impress them in the future more deeply than the Persian. It is the period of the struggle between Asia and Europe, between Persia and Greece: the period of Marathon and Thermopylæ, of Salamis and Platæa, of Xenophon and the Ten Thousand. Greek fleets occupied Cyprus and visited the Delta. Greek armies—in the pay of Persia—trode for the first time the soil of Syria.¹

In such a world, dominated for the first time by the Aryan, Jews returned from exile, rebuilt their Temple and resumed its ritual, revived Prophecy and codified the Law: in short, restored and organised Israel, and developed their religion to those forms in which it has accomplished its service to the world.

In this period Prophecy does not maintain that position which it has hitherto held in the life of Israel, and the reasons for its decline are obvious. To begin with, the national life, from which it springs, is of a poorer quality. Israel is no longer a kingdom, but a colony. The state is not independent: there is virtually no state. The community is poor and feeble, cut off from the habit and prestige of their past, and

¹ The authorities for this period are:—A. Ancient: the inscriptions of Nabonidus, last native King of Babylon, Cyrus and Darius I; the Hebrew writings composed in, or recording the history of, the period; the Greek historians Herodotus, fragments of Ctesias in Diodorus Sic., etc., of Abydenus in Eusebius, Berosus. B. Modern: Meyer's and Duncker's *Histories of Antiquity*; art. 'Persia' in *Enc. Bibl.* by Brown and Tiele; J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Times*, etc., 1914; the works of Kuenen, Van Hoonacker and Kisters given on p. 194; histories of Israel, Stade's, Wellhausen's, Klostermann's; P. Hay Hunter, *After the Exile*, 2 vols., Edin., 1890; W. Fairweather, *From the Exile to the Advent*, Edin., 1895. On Ezra and Nehemiah see Ryle's *Commentary in Camb. Bible for Schools*, and Bertheau-Ryssel's in *Kurzgefasstes Exeg. Handbuch*; also C. C. Torrey, *The Composition and Historical Value of Ezra-Nehemiah*, in *Beihefte zur Z.A.T.W.*, II, 1896.

beginning the rudiments of life again in struggle with nature and hostile tribes. To this level Prophecy has to descend, and occupy itself with these rudiments. We miss the civic atmosphere, the spaces of public life, the ethical issues. Instead we have tearful questions, raised by a grudging soil and bad seasons, with the petty selfishness of hunger-bitten peasants. The duties of the colony are mainly ecclesiastical: the building of a temple, the arrangement of ritual, and the ceremonial discipline of the people in separation from their neighbours. We miss, too, the outlook of the earlier prophets upon the history of the world, and their rational grasp of its forces. The world is still seen, and even to further distances. The people abate no whit of their ideal to be teachers of mankind. But it is through another medium. The lurid air of Apocalypse envelops the future, and in their weakness to grapple either politically or philosophically with the problems which history offers, the prophets resort to the expectation of physical catastrophes and the intervention of supernatural armies. Such an atmosphere is not the native air of Prophecy, and Prophecy yields its office in Israel to other forms of religious development. On one side the ecclesiastic comes to the front—the legalist, the organiser of ritual, the priest; on another, the teacher, the moralist and the speculator. At the same time personal religion is more deeply cultivated than at any other stage of the people's history. A number of lyrical pieces bear proof of the existence of a genuine and beautiful piety throughout the period.

Unfortunately the Jewish records for this time are fragmentary and confused; they touch the general history of the world only at intervals, and give rise to

a number of questions, some of which are insoluble. The clearest and only consecutive line of data through the period is the list of the Persian monarchs. The Persian Empire (539-331) was sustained through eleven reigns and two usurpations, of which the following is a chronological table :—

Cyrus (Kurush) the Great	.	.	.	539-529
Cambyses (Kambuyiya)	.	.	.	529-522
Pseudo-Smerdis, or Bardiya	.	.	.	522
Darius (Darayahush) I, Hystaspis	.	.	.	521-485
Xerxes (Kshayarsha) I.	.	.	.	485-464
Artaxerxes (Artakshathra) I, Longimanus	.	.	.	464-424
Xerxes II	.	.	.	424-423
Sogdianus	.	.	.	423
Darius II, Nothus	.	.	.	423-404
Artaxerxes II, Mnemon	.	.	.	404-358
Artaxerxes III, Ochus	.	.	.	358-338
Arses	.	.	.	338-335
Darius III, Codomannus	.	.	.	335-331

Of these names, Cyrus, Darius, Xerxes (Ahasuerus) and Artaxerxes are among the Biblical data ; but the fact that there are three Darius, two Xerxes and three Artaxerxes makes possible more than one set of identifications, and suggests different chronological schemes. The simplest and most generally accepted identification of the Darius, Xerxes (Ahasuerus) and Artaxerxes of the Biblical history,¹ is that they were the first Persian monarchs of these names ; and after needful rearrangement of the somewhat confused order of events in the narrative of the Book of Ezra, it was held as settled that, while the exiles returned under

¹ Ezra iv. 5-7, etc., vi. 1-14, etc.

Cyrus about 537, Haggai and Zechariah prophesied and the Temple was built under Darius I between the second and sixth year of his reign (520-516); that attempts were made to build the walls of Jerusalem under Xerxes I (485-464), but especially under Artaxerxes I (464-424), under whom Ezra in 458 and Nehemiah in 445 arrived at Jerusalem, promulgated the Law and reorganised Israel.

But this has not satisfied all modern critics. Some, in the interests of the authenticity and correct order of the Book of Ezra, and some for other reasons, argue that the Darius under whom the Temple was built was Darius II, or Nothus (423-404), and thus bring down the building of the Temple and Haggai and Zechariah a century later than the accepted theory;¹ and that therefore the Artaxerxes, under whom Ezra and Nehemiah laboured, was not the first Artaxerxes, or Longimanus (464-424), but the second, or Mnemon (404-358).² This arrangement finds support in the data, and especially in the *order* of the data, of the Book of Ezra, which describes the building of the Temple under Darius *after* its record of events under Xerxes I (Ahasuerus) and Artaxerxes I.³ But, as we shall see, the Compiler of the Book of Ezra has seen fit, for some reason, to violate the chronological order of the data at his disposal, and nothing reliable can be built upon his arrangement. Unravel his confused history, take the contemporary data supplied in Haggai and

¹ Havet, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, XCIV, 799 ff.; Imbert (in defence of the historicity of the Book of Ezra), *Le Temple Reconstitué par Zorobabel*, extrait du *Muséon*, 1888-89 (not seen); Sir H. Howorth in the *Academy* for 1893—especially pp. 326 ff.

² Another French writer, Bellangé, in the *Muséon* for 1890, quoted by Kuenen (*Ges. Abhandl.*, p. 213), goes further, and places Ezra and Nehemiah under the *third* Artaxerxes, Ochus (358-338).

³ Ezra iv. 6-v.

Zechariah, add the historical probabilities of the time, and you find, as the three Dutch scholars Kuenen, Van Hoonacker and Kusters have done,¹ that the rebuilding of the Temple cannot be dated so late as the reign of the second Darius (423-404), but must be left, according to the usual acceptation, under Darius I (521-485). Haggai, for instance, plainly implies that among those who saw the Temple rising were men who had seen its predecessor destroyed in 586,² and Zechariah declares that God's wrath on Jerusalem has just lasted seventy years.³ Nor (however much his confusion may give grounds to the contrary) can the Compiler of the Book of Ezra have meant any other reign for the building of the Temple than that of Darius I. He mentions that nothing was done to the Temple *all the days of Cyrus and up to the reign of Darius*:⁴ by this he cannot intend to pass over the first Darius and leap on three more reigns, or a century, to Darius II. He mentions Zerubbabel and Jeshua both as at the head of the exiles who returned under Cyrus, and as presiding at the building of the Temple under Darius.⁵ If alive in 536, they may well have been alive in 521, but cannot have survived till 423.⁶ These data are supported by the historical probabilities. It is inconceivable that the Jews delayed the building of the Temple for more than a century from the time of Cyrus. That the Temple was built by Zerubbabel and

¹ Kuenen, *De Chronologie van het Perzische Tijdvak der Joodsche Geschiedenis*, 1890, trans. by Budde in Kuenen's *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, pp. 212 ff.; Van Hoonacker, *Zorobabel et le Second Temple* (1892); Kusters, *Het Herstel van Israel*, in *Het Perzische Tijdvak*, 1894, trans. by Basedow, *Die Wiederherstellung Israels im Persischen Zeitalter*, 1896.

² Hag. ii. 3.

³ Zech. i. 12.

⁴ Ezra iv. 5.

⁵ *Id.* ii. 2, iv. 1 ff., v. 2.

⁶ As Kuenen shows, p. 226, nothing can be deduced from Ezra vi. 14.

Jeshua in the beginning of the reign of Darius I, may be considered as one of the unquestionable data of our period.

But if this be so, there falls much of the argument for placing the building of the walls of Jerusalem and the labours of Ezra and Nehemiah under Artaxerxes II (404-358) instead of Artaxerxes I. It is true that some who accept the building of the Temple under Darius I yet put Ezra and Nehemiah under Artaxerxes II. The weakness of their case has been exposed by Kuenen,¹ who proves that Nehemiah's mission to Jerusalem must have fallen in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes I (445).² 'On this fact there can be no further difference of opinion.'³

These two dates then are fixed: the beginning of the Temple in 520 by Zerubbabel and Jeshua, and the arrival of Nehemiah at Jerusalem in 445. Other points are more difficult to establish, and in particular obscurity rests on the date of the two visits of Ezra to Jerusalem. According to the Book of Ezra,⁴ he went there first in the seventh year of Artaxerxes I (458 B.C.), thirteen years before the arrival of Nehemiah. He found many Jews married to heathen wives, laid it to heart, and called an assembly of the people to drive

¹ P. 227; in answer to De Saulcy, *Étude Chronologique des Livres d'Esdras et de Nehémie* (1868), *Sept Siècles de l'Histoire Judaïque* (1874). De Saulcy's case rests on Josephus, XI *Ant.*, vii. 2-8 (cf. ix. 1), the untrustworthiness of which and its confusion of two distant eras Kuenen has no difficulty in showing.

² When Nehemiah came to Jerusalem Eliyashib was high priest, and he was grandson of Jeshua, high priest in 520, seventy-five years before; but between 520 and the twentieth year of Artaxerxes II lie 136 years. Again, the Artaxerxes of Ezra iv. 8-23, under whom the walls of Jerusalem were begun, was the immediate follower of Xerxes (Ahasuerus), and therefore Artaxerxes I, and Van Hoonacker has shown that he must be the Artaxerxes of Nehemiah.

³ Kusters, p. 43.

⁴ vii. 1-8.

the latter out of the community. Then we hear no more of him: neither in the negotiations with Artaxerxes about the building of the walls, nor upon the arrival of Nehemiah, nor in Nehemiah's treatment of the mixed marriages. He is absent, till suddenly he appears at the dedication of the walls by Nehemiah and at the reading of the Law.¹ This 'eclipse of Ezra,' as Kuenen calls it, taken with the mixed character of the records left of him, has moved some to deny to him and his reforms and his promulgation of the Law any reality whatever; ² while others, with a more sober and rational criticism, have sought to solve the difficulties by another arrangement of the events than that usually accepted. Van Hoonacker dates Ezra's *first* appearance in Jerusalem at the dedication of the walls and promulgation of the Law in 445, and refers his arrival described in Ezra vii and attempts to abolish the mixed marriages to a second visit in the twentieth year, not of Artaxerxes I, but of Artaxerxes II (398 B.C.). Kuenen has exposed the unlikelihood, if not impossibility, of so late a date for Ezra, and in this Kusters holds with him.³ But Kusters agrees with Van Hoonacker in placing Ezra's activity subsequent to Nehemiah's and the dedication of the walls.

These questions about Ezra have little bearing on our present study, and it is not our duty to discuss them. But Kuenen, in answer to Van Hoonacker, has shown strong reasons ⁴ for holding in the main to the generally accepted theory of Ezra's arrival in Jerusalem in 458, the seventh year of Artaxerxes I; and though

¹ Neh. xii. 26, viii. x.

² Vernes, *Précis d'Histoire Juive depuis les Origines jusqu'à l'Époque Persane* (1889), pp. 579 ff. (not seen); C. C. Torrey, *The Composition, etc., of Ezra-Nehemiah*, *Beihefte zur Z.A.T.W.*, II, 1896.

³ Pages 113 ff.

⁴ Page 237.

there are difficulties about the narrative which follows, and especially about Ezra's disappearance from the scene till after Nehemiah's arrival, reasons may be found for this.¹

We are justified in holding to the traditional arrangement of the events in Israel in the fifth century. We may divide the Persian period by the two points we found certain, the beginning of the Temple under Darius I in 520 and the mission of Nehemiah to Jerusalem in 445, and by the other that we found probable, Ezra's arrival in 458.

On these data the Persian period may be arranged under the following four sections, among which we place those prophets who respectively belong to them :—

1. From the Taking of Babylon by Cyrus to the Completion of the Temple in the sixth year of Darius I, 538–516 : Haggai and Zechariah in 520 ff.

2. From the Completion of the Temple to the arrival of Ezra in the seventh year of Artaxerxes I, 516–458 : sometimes called the period of silence, but probably yielding the Book of 'Malachi.'

3. The Work of Ezra and Nehemiah under Artaxerxes I, Longimanus, 458–425.

4. The Rest, Xerxes II to Darius III, 425–331 : Joel and some anonymous fragments.

Of these four sections we must now examine the first, for it forms the introduction to Haggai and Zechariah, and it raises a question almost greater than any we have been discussing. The fact recorded by the Book of Ezra, and generally accepted by tradition

¹ The failure of his too hasty and impetuous attempts at so wholesale a measure as the banishment of the heathen wives, or his return to Babylon, having accomplished his end. See Ryle, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, in the *Cambridge Bible for Schools*, Introd., pp. xl f.

and modern criticism, the first Return of Exiles from Babylon under Cyrus, has been denied; and the builders of the Temple in 520 have been asserted to be, not returned exiles, but the remnant left in Judah by Nebuchadrezzar in 586. The importance of this for our interpretation of Haggai and Zechariah, who instigated the building of the Temple, is obvious.

CHAPTER XVI

FROM THE RETURN FROM BABYLON TO THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE

(536-516 B.C.)

CYRUS took Babylon and the Babylonian Empire in 539. Upon the eve of his conquest the Second Isaiah had hailed him as the Liberator of God's people and builder of their Temple. The Return of the Exiles and the Restoration of Temple and City were predicted by the Second Isaiah for the immediate future; and the Compiler of the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, about 300 B.C., has taken up the story of how those came to pass from the first year of Cyrus onward. Before discussing the dates and order of those events, it is well to have this Chronicler's story before us. It lies in the first and following chapters of our Book of Ezra.

According to this, Cyrus, soon after his conquest of Babylon, gave permission to the Jewish exiles to return to Palestine, and between forty and fifty thousand¹ did return, bearing the vessels of Yahweh's house which the Chaldeans had taken away in 586.

¹ 42,360, *besides their servants*, is the sum in Ezra ii. 64; but the detailed figures in Ezra amount only to 29,818, those in Nehemiah to 31,089, and those in 1 Esdras to 30,143 (other MSS. 30,678). See Ryle on Ezra ii. 64.

These Cyrus delivered to *Sheshbazzar, prince of Judah*¹ (who is further described in an Aramaic document incorporated by the Compiler of the Book of Ezra as *Pehah, or provincial governor*,² and as laying the foundation of the Temple),³ and there is also mentioned in command of the people a *Tirshatha*, probably the Persian Tarsâta,⁴ which also means *provincial governor*. Upon their arrival at Jerusalem, the date of which will be immediately discussed, the people are said to be under Jeshu'a ben Jōšadak⁵ and Zerubbabel ben She'altî'el,⁶ who had already been mentioned as the head of the returning exiles,⁷ and who is called by his contemporary Haggai *Pehah, or governor, of Judah*.⁸ Are we to understand by Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel one and the same person? Most critics have answered in the affirmative, believing that Sheshbazzar is but the Babylonian or Persian name by which the Jew Zerubbabel was known at court;⁹ and this view is supported by the facts that Zerubbabel was of the house of David and is called *Pehah* by Haggai, and by the argument that the Tirshatha's command to the Jews to abstain from *eating the most holy things*¹⁰ could only have been given by a Jew.¹¹ But others, arguing that Ezra v. 1, compared with vv. 14 and 16, implies that Zerubbabel and Sheshbazzar were different persons, take the former to have been the most promi-

¹ Ezra i. 8.² *Id.* v. 14.³ *Id.* 16.⁴ *Id.* ii. 63.⁵ יֵשׁוּעַ בֶּן-יֹזָדָק : Ezra iii. 2, like Ezra i. 1-8, from the Compiler

cEzra-Nehemiah.

⁶ זֶרֻבָבֶל בֶּן-שְׁאֲלֻתַיֵּל.⁷ Ezra ii. 2.⁸ Hag. i. 14, ii. 2, 21, and perhaps by Nehemiah (vii. 65-70). Nehemiah is styled Pehah (xii. 26) and Tirshatha (viii. 9, x. 1).⁹ As Daniel and his three friends had also Babylonian names.¹⁰ Ezra ii. 63.¹¹ Cf. Ryle, xxxi ff.; and on Ezra i. 8, ii. 63

ment of the Jews, but the latter an official appointed by Cyrus to carry out such business in connection with the Return as could only be discharged by an imperial officer.¹ This is the more probable theory.

If it is right, Sheshbazzar, who superintended the Return, had disappeared from Jerusalem by 521, when Haggai commenced to prophesy, and had been succeeded as Pehah, or governor, by Zerubbabel. But in that case the Compiler has been in error in calling Sheshbazzar *a prince of Judah*.²

The next point to fix is what the Compiler considers to have been the date of the Return. He names no year, but he says that the same people, whom he has described as receiving the command of Cyrus to return, did immediately leave Babylon.³ and that they arrived at Jerusalem in *the seventh month*, but again without stating a year.⁴ In any case, he obviously intends to imply that the Return followed immediately on reception of the permission to return, and that this was given by Cyrus soon after his occupation of Babylon in 539-538. We may take it that the Compiler understood the year to be that we know as 537 B.C. He adds that, on the arrival of the caravans from Babylon, the Jews set up the altar on its old site and restored the morning and evening sacrifices; that they kept also the Feast of Tabernacles, and thereafter all the *feasts*

¹ Stade, *Gesch. des Volkes Israel*, II, pp. 98 ff.; cf. Kuenen, *Gesam-melt. Abhandl.*, 220.

² Ezra i. 8.

³ *Id.* i. compared with ii. 1.

⁴ Some find this in 1 Esdras v. 1-6, where it is said that Darius, a name they take to be an error for Cyrus, brought the exiles with an escort of a thousand cavalry, starting in the first month of the second year of the king's reign. This passage is not beyond suspicion as a gloss (see Ryle on Ezra i. 11), and even if genuine may be intended to describe a second contingent of exiles despatched by Darius I in his second year (520). The names include that of Jesua, son of Jošedec, and instead of Zerubbabel's, that of his son Joacim.

of *Yahweh*; and further, that they engaged masons and carpenters for building the Temple, and Phœnicians to bring them cedar from Lebanon.¹

Another section from the Compiler states that the Jews set to work on the Temple *in the second month of the second year* of their Return, presumably 536 B.C., laying the foundation with due pomp, amid the excitement of the people.² Whereupon *adversaries*, by whom the Compiler means Samaritans, demanded a share in the building of the Temple, and when Jeshua and Zerubbabel refused this, *the people of the land* frustrated the building till the reign of Darius (521 ff.).

This, the second year of Darius, is the point to which contemporary documents, the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah, assign the beginning of new measures to build the Temple. Of these the Compiler of the Book of Ezra says in the meantime nothing, but after barely mentioning the reign of Darius leaps³ to further Samaritan obstructions—though not of the building of the Temple (be it noted), but of the building of the Walls—in the reigns of Ahasuerus, or Xerxes, presumably Xerxes I, the successor of Darius (485–464) and of his successor Artaxerxes I (464–424);⁴ the account of the latter of which he gives not in his own language but in that of an Aramaic document, Ezra iv. 8 ff. This document, after recounting how Artaxerxes empowered the Samaritans to stop the building of the Walls, records⁵ that the building ceased *till the second year of the reign of Darius*, when the prophets Haggai and Zechariah stirred up Zerubbabel and Jeshua to rebuild, not the city Walls, be it observed, but the Temple, and with the permission of Darius

¹ Ezra iii. 3–7.

² *Id.* 8–13.

³ *Id.* iv. 7

⁴ See above, pp. 194 f.

⁵ *Id.* 24.

this building was completed in his sixth year.¹ That is to say, this Aramaic document brings us back, with *the frustrated building of the walls* under Xerxes I and Artaxerxes I (485-424), to the same date under their predecessor Darius I, *viz.*, 520, to which the Compiler had brought down *the frustrated building of the Temple!* The most reasonable explanation of this confusion, not only of chronology, but of two distinct processes—the erection of the Temple and the fortification of the city—is that the Compiler was misled by his desire to give a strong impression of the Samaritan obstructions by placing them all together. Attempts to harmonise the order of his narrative with the ascertained sequence of the Persian reigns have failed.²

Such is the character of the compilation known as the Book of Ezra. If we add that in its present form it cannot be earlier than 300 B.C., or 236 years after the Return, and that the Aramaic document which it incorporates is probably not earlier than 430, or 100 years after the Return, while the List of Exiles which it gives (in ch. ii) contains elements that cannot be earlier than 430, we shall not wonder that doubts should have been raised of its trustworthiness.

These doubts affect, with one exception, all the facts which it professes to record. The exception is the

¹ Ezra iv. 24-vi. 15.

² There are in the main two classes of such attempts. (a) Some have suggested that the Ahasuerus (Xerxes) and Artaxerxes mentioned in Ezra iv. 6 and 7 ff. are not the successors of Darius I who bore these names, but titles of his predecessors, Cambyses and the Pseudo-Smerdis (see above, p. 192). This view has been disposed of by Kuenen, *Ges. Abhandl.*, pp. 224 ff., and Ryle, pp. 65 ff. (b) The attempt to prove that the Darius under whom the Temple was built was not Darius I (521-485), the predecessor of Xerxes I and Artaxerxes I (485-424), but their successor once removed, Darius II, Nothus (423-404). So, in defence of the Book of Ezra, Imbert. For his theory and the answer to it see above, pp. 193 f.

building of the Temple between the second and sixth years of Darius I (520–516), which we have seen to be past doubt.¹ But all that the Book of Ezra relates before this has been called in question, and it has been alleged: (1) that there was no such attempt as the book describes to build the Temple before 520, (2) that there was no Return of Exiles under Cyrus, and that the Temple was not built by Jews returned from Babylon, but by Jews who had never left Judah.

These conclusions, if justified, would have an important bearing upon our interpretation of Haggai and Zechariah. It is necessary to examine them. They were reached by critics in the order just stated, but as the second is the more sweeping and involves the other, we may take it first.

1. Is the Book of Ezra, then, right in asserting that there was a return of Jews, headed by Zerubbabel and Jeshua, about 536, and that they in 520–516 rebuilt the Temple?

The argument that in recounting these events the Book of Ezra is unhistorical was stated by Professor Kusters of Leiden.² He reaches his conclusion along three lines: the Books of Haggai and Zechariah, the sources from which he believes the Aramaic narrative, Ezra v. 1–vi. 18, to have been compiled, and the list of names in Ezra ii. In the Books of Haggai and Zechariah he points out that the inhabitants of Jerusalem whom the prophets summon to build the Temple are not called by any name which implies that they are returned exiles; that nothing in the description of them would lead us to suppose this; that God's anger

¹ See above, pp. 194 ff.

² For his work see above, p. 194, n. 1. Previous to Kusters, the Return under Cyrus had been questioned only by the arbitrary scholar M. Vernes in 1889–1890.

against Israel is represented as still unbroken ; that neither prophet speaks of a Return as past, but that Zechariah seems to look for it as still to come.¹ The second line is an analysis of the Aramaic document, Ezra v. 6 ff., into two sources, neither of which implies a Return under Cyrus. But these two lines of proof cannot avail against the List of Returned Exiles in Ezra ii and Nehemiah vii, if the latter be genuine. On his third line, Dr. Kusters disputes the genuineness of this List, and denies that it gives itself out as a List of Exiles returned under Cyrus. He arrives at the conclusion that there was no Return from Babylon under Cyrus, nor any before the Temple was built in 520 ff., but that the builders were *people of the land*, Jews who had never gone into exile.

The evidence Kusters draws from the Book of Ezra least concerns us. Both because of this and because it is the weakest of his case, we may take it first.

Kusters analyses the bulk of the Aramaic document, Ezra v-vi. 18, into two constituents. His arguments are precarious.² The first document, which he takes to consist of ch. v. 1-5 and 10, with perhaps vi. 6-15 (except a few phrases), relates that Thathnai, Satrap of the West of the Euphrates, asked Darius whether he might allow the Jews to proceed with the

¹ ii. 6 ff. Eng., 10 ff. Heb.

² His chief grounds are (1) that in v. 1-5 the Jews are said to have *begun* to build the Temple in the second year of Darius, while in v. 16 the foundation-stone is said to have been laid under Cyrus ; (2) the frequent want of connection through the passage ; (3) an alleged doublet : in v. 17-vi. 1 search is said to have been made for the edict of Cyrus *in Babylon*, while in vi. 2 the edict is said to have been found *in Ecbatana*. But (1) and (3) are capable of explanations, and (2) is far from conclusive. —The remainder of the Aramaic text, iv. 8-24, Kusters seeks to prove is by the Compiler himself. As Torrey (*op. cit.*, p. 11) has shown, this 'is as unlikely as possible.' At the most he may have added to the Aramaic document.

building of the Temple, and was commanded not only to allow but to help them, on the ground that Cyrus had given them permission. The second, ch. v. 11-17, vi. 1-3, affirms that the building had actually begun under Cyrus, who sent Sheshbazzar, the Satrap, to see it carried out. Neither of these documents says a word about an order from Cyrus to the Jews to return; and the implication of the second, that the building had gone on from Cyrus' order to the second year of Darius,¹ is not in harmony with the evidence of the Compiler of the Book of Ezra, who, as we have seen,² states that Samaritan obstruction stayed the building till the second year of Darius.

But suppose we accept Kusters' premisses and agree that these two documents exist within Ezra v-vi. 18. Their evidence is not irreconcilable. Both imply that Cyrus gave command to rebuild the Temple: if they were originally independent that would but strengthen the tradition of such a command, and render weaker Kusters' contention that the tradition arose from a desire to find a fulfilment of the Second Isaiah's predictions³ that Cyrus would be the Temple's builder. That neither of the supposed documents mentions the

¹ Ezra v. 16.

² Above, pp. 203 f.

³ Isa. xlv. 28, xlv. 1. According to Kusters, the statement of the Aramaic document about the rebuilding of the Temple is therefore a pious invention of a literal fulfilment of prophecy. To this opinion Cheyne adheres (*Introd. to the Book of Isaiah*, 1895, p. xxxix), and adds the further assumption that the Chronicler, being 'shocked at the ascription to Cyrus (for the Judæan builders have no credit given them) of what must, he thought, have been at least equally due to the zeal of the exiles,' invented his story in the earlier chapters of Ezra as to the part the exiles themselves took in the rebuilding. It will be noticed that these assumptions have the value of such. They are the imputation of motives, more or less probable, to the writers of certain statements, and may be fairly met by probabilities from the other side. But of this more later on.

Return itself is very natural, because both are concerned with the building of the Temple. For the Compiler of the Book of Ezra, who on Kusters' argument put them together, the interest of the Return is over; he has sufficiently dealt with it. But more—Kusters' second document, which ascribes the building of the Temple to Cyrus, surely by that statement implies a Return of Exiles during his reign. For is it probable that Cyrus would have committed the rebuilding of the Temple to a Persian magnate like Sheshbazzar, without sending with him a number of those Babylonian Jews who must have instigated the king to order the rebuilding? We conclude that Ezra v-vi. 18, whatever be its value and its date, contains no evidence, positive or negative, against a Return of the Jews under Cyrus, but takes this for granted.

We turn to Kusters' treatment of the so-called List of the Returned Exiles. He holds this to have been, not only borrowed for Ezra ii from Nehemiah vii,¹ but even interpolated in the latter. His reasons are improbable, as will be seen from the appended note, and weaken his otherwise strong case.² As to the

¹ This is the opinion of critics, who hold it to be genuine—*e.g.*, Ryle.

² He seeks to argue that a List of Exiles returned under Cyrus in 536 could be of no use for Nehemiah's purpose to obtain in 445 a census of the inhabitants of Jerusalem; but surely, if in his efforts Nehemiah discovered the existence of such a List, it was natural for him to give it as the basis of his inquiry, or (because the List—see above, p. 203—contains elements from Nehemiah's own time) to enlarge and bring it down to date. But Kusters thinks also that, as Nehemiah would not have broken the connection of his memoirs with such a List, the latter must have been inserted by the Compiler, who at this point grew weary of the discursiveness of the memoirs, broke from them, and then—inserted this lengthy List! This is incredible—that he should atone for the diffuseness of Nehemiah's memoirs by the intrusion of a long catalogue with no relevance to the point at which he broke them off.

contents of the List, there are, it is true, many elements which date from Nehemiah's own time and even later. But these are not sufficient to prove that the List was not originally a List of Exiles returned under Cyrus. The verses in which this is asserted—Ezra ii. 1, 2; Nehemiah vii. 6, 7—intimate that those Jews who came up out of the Exile were the same who built the Temple under Darius. Kusters endeavours to destroy the force of this (if true so destructive of his theory) by pointing to the number of the leaders which the List assigns to the returning exiles. In fixing this as twelve, the author, Kusters maintains, intended to make the leaders representative of the twelve tribes and the body of returned exiles as equivalent to All-Israel. But, he argues, neither Haggai nor Zechariah considers the builders of the Temple to be equivalent to All-Israel, nor was this conception realised in Judah till after the arrival of Ezra with his bands. The force of this argument is weakened by remembering how natural it would have been for men, who felt the Return under Cyrus, however small, to be the fulfilment of the Second Isaiah's glorious predictions of a restoration of All-Israel, to appoint twelve leaders, and so make them representative of the nation. Kusters' argument against the naturalness of such an appointment in 537, and therefore against the truth of the statement of the List about it, falls to the ground.

But in the Books of Haggai and Zechariah Kusters finds more formidable witness for his thesis that there was no Return of exiles from Babylon before the building of the Temple under Darius. These Books nowhere speak of a Return under Cyrus, nor do they call the community who built the Temple by the names of Gôlah or B'ne ha-Gôlah, *Captivity* or *Sons of the Captivity*, which are given after the Return of

Ezra's bands; but they name them *this people*¹ or *remnant of the people*,² *people of the land*,³ *Judah* or *House of Judah*,⁴ names suitable to Jews who had not left the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. Even if we except the phrase *the remnant of the people*, as intended by Haggai and Zechariah in the sense of *the rest* or *all the others*,⁵ we have still to deal with the other titles, with the absence from them of any symptom descriptive of return from exile, and with the silence of our two prophets concerning such a return. These are striking, and undoubtedly afford evidence for Kusters' thesis.⁶ But it cannot escape notice that their evidence is mainly negative, and this raises two questions: (1) Can the phenomena in Haggai and Zechariah be accounted for? and (2) whether accounted for or not, can they prevail against the mass of positive evidence in favour of a Return under Cyrus?

An explanation of the absence of allusion in Haggai and Zechariah to the Return is possible.

No one can fail to be struck with the spirituality of the teaching of Haggai and Zechariah. Their ambition is to put courage from God into the poor hearts before them, that these out of their own resources may rebuild

¹ Hag. i. 2, 12; ii. 14.

² *Id.* i. 12, 14; ii. 2; Zech. viii. 6, 11, 12.

³ Hag. ii. 4; Zech. vii. 5.

⁴ Zech. ii. 12; viii. 13, 15.

⁵ It is used in Hag. i. 12, 14, ii. 2, only after the mention of the leaders; but see Pusey's note 9 to Hag. i. 12; while in Zech. viii. 6, 11, 18, it might be argued that it was employed so as to cover not only Jews who had not left the land, but all Jews left of ancient Israel.

⁶ Compare Cheyne, *Introd. to the Bk. of Isaiah*, 1895, pp. xxxv ff., who says that in the main points Kusters' conclusions 'appear so inevitable' that he has 'constantly presupposed them' in dealing with chs. lvi-lxvi of Isaiah; and Torrey, *op. cit.*, 1896, p. 53⁶: 'Kusters has demonstrated from the testimony of Haggai and Zechariah, that Zerubbabel and Jeshua were not returned exiles; furthermore, that Haggai and Zechariah knew nothing of an important return of exiles from Babylonia.' Cf. Wildeboer, *Litt. des A.T.*, pp. 291 ff.

the Temple. As Zechariah puts it, *Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith Yahweh of Hosts.*¹ It is obvious why men of this temper should refrain from appealing to the Return, or to the power of Persia by which it had been achieved. We understand why, while the annals employed in the Book of Ezra record the appeal by the leaders of the Jews to Darius upon the strength of the edict of Cyrus, the prophets, in their effort to encourage the people to make the most of what they themselves were and to enforce the omnipotence of God's Spirit apart from human aids, should be silent about the latter. We must also remember that Haggai and Zechariah addressed a people to whom (whatever view we take of the transactions under Cyrus) the favour of Cyrus had been a disillusion in the light of the predictions of Second Isaiah.² The Persian magnate Sheshbazzar, invested with full power, had been unable to build the Temple, and had apparently disappeared from Judah, leaving his powers as Pehah to Zerubbabel. Was it not as suitable to these circumstances, as essential to the prophets' own temper, that Haggai and Zechariah should refrain from alluding to the political advantages to which their countrymen had hitherto trusted in vain? ³

Another fact should be marked. If Haggai is silent about any return from exile in the past, he is equally

¹ iv. 4.

² Of course it is possible that, if there had been no Return under Cyrus, the community in 520 had not heard of the prophecies of Isaiah II.

³ This argument, it is true, does not account for the fact that Haggai and Zechariah never call the Jewish community at Jerusalem by a name significant of their return from exile. But as to this it ought to be noted that even the Aramaic document which records the Return under Cyrus does not call the builders of the Temple by a name which implies that they have come from exile, but styles them *the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem* (Ezra v. 1), in contrast to Jews who were abroad.

silent about any in the future. If for him no return had yet taken place, would he not have been likely to predict it as certain to happen? ¹ At least his silence proves how strictly he confined his thoughts to the circumstances before him, and to the needs of his people at the moment he addressed them. Koster alleges that Zechariah describes the Return as still future—*viz.*, in the lyric appended to his Third Vision.² But, as we shall see, this lyric is probably an intrusion among the Visions, and not to be assigned to Zechariah. Even if it were from the same date and author as the Visions, this would not prove that no return from Babylon had taken place, but only that numbers of Jews still remained in Babylon.

But we may take a further step. If there were these reasons for the silence of Haggai and Zechariah about a return of exiles under Cyrus, can that silence prevail against the testimony we have that a return took place? It is true that, while the Books of Haggai and Zechariah are contemporary with the period in question, some of the evidence for the Return, Ezra i and iii-iv. 7, is at least two centuries later, and of the date of the rest, the List in Ezra ii and the Aramaic document in Ezra iv. 8 ff., we have no proof. But that the List is from a date soon after Cyrus is allowed by a number of advanced critics,³ and even if we ignore it, we still have the Aramaic document, which agrees with Haggai and Zechariah in assigning the effectual beginning of the Temple-building to the second year of Darius and the leadership of Zerubbabel and Jeshua at the instigation

¹ Why does he ignore the Exile itself if no return has taken place?

² Zech. ii. 10-17 Heb., 6-13 Eng.

³ Stade, Kuenen (*op. cit.*, p. 216). So Klostermann, *Gesch. des Volkes Israel*, 1896. Wellhausen, in his *Gesch.*, does not admit that the List is of exiles returned under Cyrus (p. 155, n.).

of the two prophets. May we not trust the same document in its relation of the main facts concerning Cyrus? Again, Ezra¹ speaks of the transgressions of the Gôlah or B'ne ha-Gôlah in intermarrying with the mixed people of the land, in a way which shows that he means by the name, not Jews who had come up with himself from Babylon, but the older community whom he found in Judah, and who had had time, as his own bands had not, to scatter over the land and enter into relations with the heathen.

But, as Kuenen points out,² we have further evidence for the probability of a Return under Cyrus, in the explicit predictions of the Second Isaiah that Cyrus would be the builder of Jerusalem and the Temple. 'If they express the expectation, nourished by the prophet and his contemporaries, then it is clear from their preservation for future generations that Cyrus did not disappoint the hope of the exiles, from whose midst this voice pealed forth to him.' This leads to other considerations. Whether was it more probable for the pauper *people of the land*, the dregs Nebuchadrezzar had left, or for the body and flower of Israel in Babylon, to rebuild the Temple? Surely for the latter.³ Among them had risen, as Cyrus drew near to Babylon, the hopes, nay, the assurance, of the Return and the Rebuilding; and with them was the

¹ ix. 4; x. 6, 7.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 216, where he also quotes the testimony of the Book of Daniel (ix. 25).

³ Since writing this I saw notes to the 2nd ed. of Wellhausen's *Gesch.*, pp. 155, 160. 'The re-founding of Jerusalem and the Temple cannot have started from the Jews left in Palestine.' 'The remnant left in the land would have restored the old popular cultus of the high places. Instead, we find even before Ezra the legitimate cultus and the hierocracy in Jerusalem: in the Temple-service proper Ezra discovers nothing to reform. Without the leaven of the Gôlah the Judaism of Palestine is in its origin incomprehensible.'

material for the latter. Is it credible that they took no advantage of their opportunity under Cyrus? Is it credible that they waited nearly a century before seeking to return, and that the building of the Temple was left to people who were half-heathen, and, in the eyes of the exiles, unholy? This would be credible only on one condition, that Cyrus and his immediate successors disappointed the predictions of the Second Isaiah and refused to allow the exiles to leave Babylon. But the little we know of these Persian monarchs points the other way: nothing is more probable, for nothing is more in harmony with Persian policy, than that Cyrus should permit the captives of the Babylon which he conquered to return.¹

We have another and, to my mind, a conclusive argument that the Jews addressed by Haggai and Zechariah were Jews returned from Babylon. Neither prophet ever charges his people with idolatry or so much as mentions idols. This is natural if the congregation addressed was composed of such pious and ardent adherents of Yahweh, as His word had brought back to Judah, when His servant Cyrus opened the way. But had Haggai and Zechariah been addressing *the people of the land*, who had never left the land, they must have spoken of idolatry.

Such considerations may justly be used against an argument which seeks to prove that the narratives of a Return under Cyrus were due to the invention of a Jewish writer who wished to record that the predictions of the Second Isaiah were fulfilled by Cyrus, their designated

¹ The inscription of Cyrus is quoted to this effect: cf. P. Hay Hunter, *op. cit.*, I, 35. But it seems that the statement of Cyrus is limited to the restoration of Assyrian idols and their worshippers to Ashur and Akkad. Still, what he did in this furnishes an argument for the probability of his having done so to the Jews.

trustee.¹ They certainly possess a higher degree of probability than that argument does.

Finally there is this consideration. If there was no return from Babylon under Cyrus, and the Temple, as Kusters alleges, was built by the *people of the land*, is it likely that the latter should have been regarded with contempt by the exiles returned under Ezra and Nehemiah? Theirs would have been the glory of reconstituting Israel, and their position different from what we find.

On these grounds we hold that the attempt to discredit the tradition of a return of exiles under Cyrus has not succeeded; that such a return remains the more probable solution of an obscure problem; and that the Jews who with Zerubbabel and Jeshua are represented by Haggai and Zechariah as building the Temple in the second year of Darius, 520, had come from Babylon about 537.² Such a conclusion need not commit us to all the data offered by the Chronicler in his story of the Return, such as the Edict of Cyrus.

2. Many, however, who grant the correctness of the tradition that a large number of Jewish exiles returned under Cyrus to Jerusalem, deny the statement of the Compiler of the Book of Ezra that the returned exiles prepared to build the Temple and laid the foundation, but were hindered from proceeding with the building till the second year of Darius.³ They maintain that this is contradicted by the contemporary statements

¹ See above, p. 206, and especially n. 3.

² Even Cheyne, accepting Kusters' conclusions as in the main points inevitable (*op. cit.*, p. xxxv), considers (p. xxxviii) that 'the earnestness of Haggai and Zechariah (who cannot have stood alone) implies the existence of a higher religious element at Jerusalem long before 432 B.C. Whence came this higher element but from its natural home among the more cultured exiles in Babylonia?'

³ Ezra iii. 8-13.

of Haggai and Zechariah, who, according to them, imply that no foundation was laid till 520 B.C.¹ For the interpretation of our prophets this is not a question of importance. But for clearness' sake we lay it open.

We may concede that in Haggai and Zechariah there is nothing which implies that the Jews had made any beginning to build the Temple before the start recorded by Haggai in 520. The one passage, Haggai ii. 18, cited to prove this,² is ambiguous, and many scholars claim it as a fixture of that date for the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month of 520.³ At the same time, and even granting that the latter interpretation of Haggai ii. 18 is correct, there is nothing in Haggai or Zechariah to make it impossible that the foundation had been laid some years before, but abandoned in face of Samaritan obstruction, as alleged in Ezra iii. 8-11. If we keep in mind Haggai's and Zechariah's silence about the Return from Babylon, and their natural concentration upon their own circumstances,⁴ we shall not be able to reckon their silence about previous attempts to build the Temple as a conclusive proof that these attempts never took place. Moreover, the Aramaic document, which agrees with our two prophets in assigning the only effective start of the work on the Temple to 520,⁵ does not deem it inconsistent with this to record that the Persian

¹ Schrader, 'Ueber die Dauer des Tempelbaues,' in *Stud. u. Krit.*, 1879, 460 ff.; Stade, *Gesch. des Volkes Israel*, II, 115 ff.; Kuenen, *op. cit.*, p. 222; Kosters, *op. cit.*, ch. i, § 1. To this others adhered: König (*Einleit.*), Ryssel (*op. cit.*) and Marti (2nd ed. of Kayser's *Theol. des A.T.*, p. 200). Schrader (p. 563) argues that Ezra iii. 8-13 was not based on a historical document, but imitates Neh. vii. 73-viii; and Stade that the Aramaic document in Ezra which ascribes the foundation to Sheshbazzar, the legate of Cyrus, was not before 430.

² Ryle, *op. cit.*, p. xxx.

³ Stade, Wellhausen, etc. See below, Ch. XVIII, on Hag. ii. 18.

⁴ See above, pp. 209 f.

⁵ Ezra iv. 24, v. 1.

Satrap West of the Euphrates¹ reported to Darius that, when he asked the Jews why they were rebuilding the Temple, they replied not only that a decree of Cyrus had permitted them,² but that his legate Sheshbazzar had actually laid the foundation on his arrival at Jerusalem, and that the building had gone on without interruption from that time to 520.³ This last assertion, which of course was false, may have been due either to a misunderstanding of the Jewish elders by the reporting Satrap, or to the Jews themselves, anxious to make strong their case. The latter is the more probable alternative. As even Stade admits, it was a natural assertion for the Jews to make, and so conceal that their effort of 520 was due to the instigation of their prophets. But in any case the Aramaic document corroborates the statement of the Compiler that a foundation was laid in the early years of Cyrus, and does not conceive this to be inconsistent with its own narrative of a stone laid in 520, and an effective start made upon the Temple works. So much does Stade feel the force of this, that he concedes not only that Sheshbazzar may have started some preparation for the Temple, but that he may have laid the stone with ceremony.⁴

Indeed, is it not probable that some early attempt was made by the exiles returned under Cyrus to rebuild the House of Yahweh? Cyrus had been predicted by Second Isaiah not only as the redeemer of God's people, but as the builder of the Temple; and all the argument which Kuenen draws from the Second Isaiah for the fact of the Return from Babylon⁵ tells equally for the fact of efforts to raise the sanctuary of Israel immediately on the Return. Among the re-

¹ Ezra v. 6.

² *Id.* 13.

³ *Id.* 16.

⁴ *Gesch.*, II, p. 123.

⁵ See above, p. 212.

turned were priests, and many no doubt of the sanguine spirits in Israel. They came from the heart of Jewry, though that heart was in Babylon; they came with the obligation of the great Deliverance upon them; they represented a community which we know to have been comparatively wealthy. Is it credible that they should not have begun the Temple at the earliest possible moment?

Nor is the story of their frustration by the Samaritans less natural.¹ It is true there were not any adversaries likely to dispute with the colonists the land in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. The Edomites had overrun the fruitful country about Hebron, and part of the Shephelah. The Samaritans held the valleys of Ephraim, and probably the plain of Ajalon. But if any peasants struggled with the stony plateaus of Benjamin and Northern Judah, such must have been of the remnant of the Jewish population left behind by Nebuchadrezzar, who clung to the soil from habit or motives of religion. Jerusalem was never a site to attract men, either for agriculture, or, now that its shrine was desolate and its population scattered, for the command of trade.² The returned exiles must have been at first undisturbed by the envy of their neighbours. The tale is probable which attributes the hostility of the latter to religious causes—the refusal of the Jews to allow the half-heathen Samaritans to share in the building of the Temple.³ The Samaritans could prevent the building. While stones were to be had in profusion from the ruins of the city and the

¹ Ezra iv. 1–4. 'That the relation of Ezra iv. 1–4 is historical seems established against objections taken to it by the reference to Esarhaddon, which A. v. Gutschmidt has vindicated by an ingenious historical combination with the aid of the Assyrian monuments (*Neue Beiträge*, p. 145).' —W. R. Smith, art. 'Haggai,' *Encycl. Brit.*

² Cf. *Hist. Geog.*, pp. 317 ff.

³ Ezra iv.

quarry to the north of it, ordinary timber did not grow in the neighbourhood, and though the story be true that a contract was already made with Phœnicians to bring cedar to Joppa, it had to be carried thence for thirty-six miles. Here, then, was the opportunity of the Samaritans. They could obstruct the carriage of the ordinary timber and of the cedar. To this state of affairs the present writer found an analogy in 1891 among the Circassian colonies settled by the Turkish Government a few years earlier near Gerasa and Rabbath-Ammon. The colonists had built their houses from the numerous ruins of these cities, but at Rabbath-Ammon they said their difficulty had been about timber. We could understand how the Beduin, who resented the settlement of Circassians on lands they had used for ages, and with whom the Circassians were at variance,¹ did what they could to make the carriage of timber impossible. Similarly with the Jews and their Samaritan adversaries. The site might be cleared and the stone of the Temple laid, but if the timber was stopped there was little use in raising the walls, and the Jews, further discouraged by the failure of their hopes of what the Return would bring them, found cause for desisting from their efforts. Bad seasons followed, the labours for their sustenance exhausted their strength, and in the sordid toil their hearts grew hard to higher interests. Cyrus died in 529, and his legate Sheshbazzar, having done nothing but lay the stone, appears to have left Judæa.² Cam-

¹ There was a sharp skirmish at Rabbath-Ammon the night we spent there, and at least one Circassian was killed.

² 'Sheshbazzar presumably having taken up his task with the usual conscientiousness of an Oriental governor, that is having done nothing though the work was nominally in hand all along (Ezra v. 16).—W. R. Smith, art. 'Haggai,' *Encycl. Brit.*

byses marched more than once through Palestine, and his army garrisoned Gaza, but he was not a monarch to consider Jewish ambitions. Therefore—although Samaritan opposition ceased on the stoppage of the Temple works and the Jews procured timber enough for their private dwellings¹—is it wonderful that the site of the Temple was neglected and the stone laid by Sheshbazzar forgotten, or that the Jews should seek to explain the disillusion of the Return by arguing that God's time for the restoration of His house had not come?

The death of a cruel monarch is always in the East an occasion for the revival of shattered hopes, and the events which accompanied the suicide of Cambyses in 522 were fraught with the possibilities of political change. Cambyses' throne had been usurped by one Gaumata, who pretended to be Smerdis or Bardiya, a son of Cyrus. In a few months Gaumata was slain by a conspiracy of Persian nobles, of whom Darius, the son of Hystaspis, by virtue of his royal descent and by his own ability, rose to the throne in 521. The empire had been too shocked by the revolt of Gaumata to settle at once under the new king, and Darius found himself engaged by insurrections in his provinces save Syria and Asia Minor.² The colonists in Jerusalem, like their Syrian neighbours, remained loyal to the new king; so loyal that their Satrap was allowed to be one of themselves—Zerubbabel, son of She'altî'el,³ a son of

¹ See below, Ch. XVIII.

² Herod., i. 130, iii. 127.

³ I Chron. iii. 19 makes him a son of Pedaiah, brother of She'altî'el, son of Jehoiachin, who was carried by Nebuchadrezzar in 597 and remained captive till 561, when Evil-Merodach set him in honour. It has been supposed that, She'altî'el dying childless, Pedaiah by levirate marriage with his widow became father of Zerubbabel.

their royal house. Yet though they were quiet, the nations were rising and the world shaken. It was such a crisis as had before in Israel reawakened prophecy. Nor did it fail now ; and when prophecy was roused what duty lay more clamant for its inspiration than that of building the Temple ?

We are in touch with the first of our post-exilic prophets, Haggai and Zechariah.

HAGGAI

Go up into the mountain, and fetch wood, and build the House.

CHAPTER XVII

THE BOOK OF HAGGAI

THE Book of Haggai contains thirty-eight verses, divided between two chapters.¹ The text is, for the prophets, a fairly sound one. The Greek version affords some corrections, but has also the usual amount of misunderstandings, and a few additions to the Hebrew text.² These and the variations in other versions will be noted in the translation.

The Book consists of four sections, each recounting a message from Yahweh to the Jews in Jerusalem in 520 B.C., *the second year of Darius* (Hystaspis), *by the hand of the prophet Haggai*.

The *first*, ch. i, dated the first day of the sixth month, our September, reproves the Jews for building their *cieled houses*, while they say that *the time for building Yahweh's house has not come*; affirms that this is the reason of their poverty and of a drought which has afflicted them. A piece of narrative is added recounting how Zerubbabel and Jeshua, the heads of the community, were stirred by this word to lead the people to begin work on the Temple on the twenty-fourth day of the same month.

The *second* section, ch. ii. 1-9, contains a message,

¹ The English division is that of the Heb. which gives 15 vv. to ch. i. LXX takes i. 15 with ii.

² ii. 9, 14; on these, see pp. 239, 242.

dated the twenty-first day of the seventh month, during our October, in which the builders are encouraged for their work. Yahweh is about to shake all nations, these shall contribute of their wealth, and the latter glory of the Temple be greater than the former.

The *third* section, ch. ii. 10-19, contains a word of Yahweh to Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, during our December. It is in the form of a parable based on ceremonial laws, according to which the touch of a holy thing does not sanctify so much as the touch of an unholy pollutes. Thus is the people polluted, and thus every work of their hands. Their sacrifices avail nought, and adversity persists : small increase of fruits, blasting, mildew and hail. But from this day God will bless.

The *fourth* section, ch. ii. 20-23, is a second word to Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month. It is for Zerubbabel, and declares that God will overthrow the thrones and destroy the forces of many Gentiles by war. In that day Zerubbabel, the Lord's elect, shall be as a signet to Him.

The authenticity of all these four sections was doubted by no one,¹ till in 1887 W. Böhme, besides pointing out some useless repetitions of words and phrases, cast suspicion on i. 13, and questioned all the *fourth* section, ii. 20-23.² With regard to i. 13, it is curious that Haggai should be described as *the messenger of Yahweh* ; while the message itself, *I am with you*, seems superfluous, and if the verse be omitted, ver. 14

W. R. Smith (*Encycl. Brit.*, art. 'Haggai,' 1880) did not even mention authenticity. 'Without doubt from Haggai himself' (Kuenen). 'The Book is without doubt to be dated, according to its whole extant contents, from the prophet Haggai, whose work fell in the year 520' (König). So Driver, Kirkpatrick, Cornill, and virtually all others except André.

¹ *Z.A.T.W.*, 1887, pp. 215 f.

runs on naturally to 12.¹ Böhme's reasons for disputing the authenticity of ii. 20-23 are less sufficient. He thinks he sees the hand of an editor in the phrase *for a second time* in ver. 20 ; notes the omission of the title ' prophet ' ² after Haggai's name, and the difference of the formula *the word came to Haggai* from that employed in previous sections, *by the hand of Haggai*, and the repetition of ver. 6*b* in ver. 21 ; and otherwise concludes that the section is from a later hand. But the formula *the word came to Haggai* occurs also in ii. 10 : ³ the other points are trivial, and while it was natural for Haggai, the contemporary of Zerubbabel, to entertain of the latter such hopes as the passage expresses, it is inconceivable that a later writer, who knew how they had not been fulfilled in Zerubbabel, should have invented them.⁴

In 1893 M. Tony André issued a work on Haggai,⁵ which seeks to prove that the *third* section of the book, ii. 10-19, is from the hand of another writer than the rest. He admits ⁶ that in neither form, style nor language is there anything to prove this distinction, and that the ideas of all the sections suit the condition of the Jews soon after the Return. But he considers that ii. 10-19 interrupts the connection between the sections on either side ; that the author is a legalist or casuist, while the author of the other sections is a man whose only ecclesiastical interest is to rebuild the Temple ; that there are contradictions between ii. 10-19 and the rest of the book ; and a difference of vocabulary. Let us consider each of these reasons.

¹ So also Wellhausen.

² Which occurs only in the LXX.

³ See note on that verse.

⁴ Cf. Wildeboer, *Litter. des A.T.*, p. 294.

⁵ *Le Prophète Aggée, Introduction Critique et Commentaire.*

⁶ Page 151.

The first, that ii. 10-19 interrupts the connection between the sections on either side, is true only in so far as it has a different subject from that which the latter have more or less in common. But the second of the latter, ii. 20-23, treats only of a corollary of the first, ii. 1-9, and that corollary may well have formed the subject of a separate oracle. Besides, as we shall see, ii. 10-19 is a natural development of ch. i.¹ The contradictions alleged by André are two. While i speaks only of a *drought*,² ii. 10-19 mentions³ as the plagues *shiddāphôn* and *yērākôn*, generally rendered *blasting* and *mildew* in our Bible, and *bārād*, or *hail*; and these he reckons as due not to drought but to excessive moisture. But *shiddāphôn* and *yērākôn*, which are always connected and are of doubtful meaning, are not referred to damp in any passage in which they occur, but appear to be the consequences of drought.⁴ The other contradiction alleged refers to the ambiguous ii. 18, on which we have seen it difficult to base any conclusion, and which will be treated when we come to it in the translation.⁵ Finally, the differences in language which André cites are largely imaginary, and it is hard to understand how a responsible critic could emphasise them. We may relegate them to a note,⁶

¹ Below, pp. 244 f.

² i. 10, 11.

³ ii. 17.

⁴ They follow drought in Amos iv. 9; and in other passages—Deut. xxviii. 22; 1 Kings viii. 37; 2 Chron. vi. 28—they occur in a list of plagues after famine, or pestilence, or fevers, all of which, with the doubtful exception of fevers, followed drought.

⁵ Above, p. 215; below, p. 243, n. 5.

⁶ Some of André's alleged differences need not be discussed, *e.g.*, that between *מִשְׁכֵּי* and *לִפְנֵי*. But here are others. He asserts that while ch. i calls *oil and wine yishar and tîrôsh*, ii. (10) 11-19 calls them *yayin and shemen*. But he overlooks the fact that the former pair, meaning the newly pressed oil and wine, suit their connection, in which the fruits of the earth are catalogued, i. 11, while the latter pair, the finished wine and oil, equally suit their connection, in which articles of

and need only remark that there is among them but one of significance: while the rest of the Book calls the Temple *the House* or *the House of Yahweh* (or of *Yahweh of Hosts*), ii. 10-19 styles it *palace*, or *temple*, of Yahweh.¹ On such a difference between two brief passages it would be unreasonable to infer a distinction of authorship. André's views have found no support.²

There is no reason to disagree with the consensus of other critics in the integrity of the Book of Haggai. The four sections are either from himself or more probably from a contemporary. They may represent,³ not

food are catalogued, ii. 12. Equally futile is the distinction between i. 9, which speaks of bringing the crops *to the house*, as we should say *home*, and ii. 19, which speaks of seed being *in the barn*. Again, what is to be said of a critic who adduces in evidence of distinction of authorship the fact that i. 6 employs the verb *labhash*, *to clothe*, while ii. 12 uses *beged* for *garment*, and who actually puts in brackets the root *bagad*, as if it anywhere in the O.T. meant *to clothe*! Again, André remarks that while ii. (10) 11-19 does not employ the title *Yahweh of Hosts*, but only *Yahweh*, the rest of the book frequently uses the former; but he omits to observe that the rest of the book, besides using *Yahweh of Hosts*, often uses the name *Yahweh* alone [the phrase in ii. (10) 11-19 is נָאֵם יְהוָה, and occurs twice, ii. 14, 17; but the rest of the book has also נָאֵם יְהוָה, ii. 4; and besides יְהוָה, i. 1, ii. 1, ii. 20; אָמַר יְהוָה, i. 8; and מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים and מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה, i. 12]. Again, André observes that while the rest of the book designates Israel always by עַם and the heathen by גּוֹי, ii. 10-19, in ver. 14, uses both of Israel. Yet in this latter case גּוֹי is used only in parallel to עַם, as frequently in the O.T. Again, while in the rest of the book Haggai is called *the prophet* (i. 13 may be omitted), he is simply named in ii. 10-19, means nothing, for the name here occurs only in introducing his contribution to a conversation, in recording which it was natural to omit titles. Similarly insignificant is the fact that while the rest of the book mentions only *the High Priest*, ch. ii. 10-19 talks only of *the priests*: because here again each is suitable to the connection.

¹ ii. 15, 18.

² André's (and even Böhme's) views have been generally ignored since the above was written in 1898. Marti, while admitting some of the differences noted by André, puts these down to interpolations in ii. 10-19 and denies they prove that this section is from another hand than the rest of the Book.

³ In this opinion, stated first by Eichhorn, most critics agree.

the full addresses given by him on the occasions stated, but summaries of these. 'It is never easy to persuade a whole population to make pecuniary sacrifices, or postpone private to public interests; and the probability is, that in these brief remains of the prophet Haggai we have but one or two specimens of a ceaseless diligence and determination, which upheld and animated the people till the work was accomplished.'¹ The style of the Book is not wholly of the bare, jejune prose which it is sometimes described to be—*omnino prosaicus* (Lowth). The passages of Haggai's own exhortation are in parallel rhythm: see especially ch. i, ver. 6.

The only other matter of Introduction to the prophet Haggai is his name. The precise form² is not elsewhere found; but one of the clans of Gad is called Haggi,³ and H G I occur as the consonants of a name on a Phœnician inscription.⁴ Some⁵ have taken Haggai to be a contraction of Haggiyah, a Levitical family,⁶ but although the final *yod* of some proper names stands for Yahweh, we cannot conclude so in this case. Others⁷ see in Haggai a contraction for Hagariah,⁸ as Zaccai, the original of Zacchæus, is a contraction of Zechariah.⁹ A more general opinion¹⁰

¹ Marcus Dods, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 1879.

² חַגַּי, Greek, Ἀγγαῖος.

³ חַגַּי, Gen. xlv. 16, Num. xxvi. 15; Greek, Ἀγγεῖ, Ἀγγεῖς.

⁴ חַגִּית, Haggith, was one of David's wives: 2 Sam. iii. 4.

⁵ No. 67 of the Phœnician inscriptions in *C.I.S.*

⁶ Hiller, *Onom. Sacrum*, Tüb., 1706 (quoted by André), and Pusey.

⁷ חַגְיָה, 1 Chron. vi. 15; Greek, Ἀγγία, Lu. Ἀναία.

⁸ Köhler, *Nachexil. Proph.*, I, 2; Wellhausen in fourth edition of Bleek's *Einleitung*; Robertson Smith, *Encycl. Brit.*, art. 'Haggai.'

⁹ חַגְרִיָּה = *Yahweh hath girded*.

¹⁰ Derenbourg, *Hist. de la Palestine*, pp. 95, 150.

¹¹ Jerome, Gesenius, and most moderns.

takes the termination as adjectival,¹ and the root to be *hag*, *feast* or *festival*.² In that case Haggai would mean *Festal*, and it has been supposed that the name would be given him from his birth on the day of a Feast. It is impossible to decide among these alternatives. M. André,³ who accepts the meaning *festal*, ventures the hypothesis that, like Malachi, Haggai is a symbolic title given by a later hand to the anonymous writer of the Book, because of the coincidence of his prophecies with solemn festivals.⁴ But the name is too often and too naturally introduced to present any analogy to that of 'Malachi'; and the hypothesis may be dismissed.

Nothing more is known of Haggai than his name and the facts given in his book. But as with other prophets, so with this, Jewish and Christian legends have been busy. Other functions have been ascribed to him; a sketch of his life has been invented. According to the Rabbis he was one of the men of the Great Synagogue, and with Zechariah and 'Malachi' transmitted to that mythical body the tradition of the older prophets.⁵ He was the author of several ceremonial regulations, and with Zechariah and 'Malachi' introduced into the alphabet the five terminal elongated letters.⁶ Christian Fathers narrate that he was of the tribe of Levi,⁷ that with Zechariah he prophesied in exile of the Return,⁸ and was still young when he

¹ As in the names קָלִי בְלוּבִי בְרָזְלִי, etc.

² The radical double *g* of which appears in composition.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 8.

⁴ i. 1, the new moon; ii. 1, the seventh day of the Feast of Tabernacles; ii. 18, the foundation of the Temple (?).

⁵ Baba-bathra, 15a, etc.

⁶ Megilla, 2b.

⁷ Hesychius: see above, p. 80, n.

⁸ Augustine, *Enarratio in Psalm cxlvii*.

arrived in Jerusalem,¹ where he died and was buried. A legend, founded on the verse which styles him *the messenger of Yahweh*, gives out that Haggai, and for similar reasons 'Malachi' and John the Baptist, were not men, but angels.² With Zechariah, Haggai appears on the titles of Psalms cxxxvii, cxlv-cxlviii in the Septuagint; cxi, cxlv, cxlvi in the Vulgate; and cxxv, cxxvi and cxlv-cxlviii in the Peshitto.³ 'In the Temple at Jerusalem he was the first who chanted the Hallelujah, . . . wherefore we say: Hallelujah, which is the hymn of Haggai and Zechariah.'⁴ These testimonies are devoid of value.

Finally, the inference from ii. 3 that Haggai in his youth had seen the former Temple, had gone into exile, and was now a very old man,⁵ may be true, but is not certain. We are ignorant of his age when the word of Yahweh came to him.

¹ Pseud-Epiphanius, *De Vitis Prophetarum*.

² Jerome on Hag. i. 13.

³ Eusebius did not find these titles in the Hexaplar Septuagint. See Field's *Hexaplar* on Psalm cxlv. 1. The titles are of course wholly without authority.

⁴ Pseud-Epiphanius, as above.

⁵ So Ewald, Wildeboer (p. 295) and others.

CHAPTER XVIII

HAGGAI AND THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE

HAGGAI I, II

WE have seen that the probable solution of the problems presented by the inadequate and confused records of the time is that a considerable number of Jewish exiles returned from Babylon to Jerusalem about 537, by permission of Cyrus, and that the Satrap whom he sent with them not only allowed them to raise the altar on its ancient site, but himself laid the foundation-stone of the Temple.¹

We have seen, too, why this attempt led to nothing, and have followed the Samaritan obstructions, the failure of the Persian patronage, the drought and bad harvests, and all the disillusion of the fifteen years succeeding the Return.² The hostility of the Samaritans was due to the refusal of the Jews to let them share in the construction of the Temple, and its virulence, probably shown by preventing the Jews from procuring timber, seems to have ceased when the Temple works were stopped. We find no mention of

¹ See above, pp. 209-217, and emphasise that adherents of Koster's theory seek to qualify his absolute negation of a Return under Cyrus, by the admission that some Jews did return; and that even Stade, who agrees in the main with Schrader that no attempt was made by the Jews to begin building the Temple till 520, admits the probability of a stone being laid by Sheshbazzar about 536.

² See above, pp. 217 ff.

it in our prophets ; and the Jews have enough timber to panel their houses.¹ But the Jews must have feared a renewal of Samaritan attacks if they resumed work on the Temple, and for the rest they were too sodden with adversity, and weighted with the care of their own sustenance, to spring at higher interests. What immediately precedes our prophets is a story of barren seasons and little income, money leaking fast, and every man's heart engrossed with his household. Little wonder that critics have been led to deny the great Return of sixteen years back with its ambitions for the Temple and the future of Israel. But the like collapse has often been experienced in history when bands of religious men, going forth, as they thought, to freedom and the erection of a holy commonwealth, have found their unity wrecked and their enthusiasm dissipated by inclement seasons on a barren and hostile shore. Nature and their barbarous fellow-men have frustrated what God promised. Themselves, accustomed from a high stage of civilisation to plan a still higher society, are reduced to the primitive necessities of tillage and defence against a savage foe. Statesmen, poets, idealists have to hoe the ground, quarry stones and keep awake of nights as sentinels. Destitute of the comforts and resources with which they have grown up, they live in battle with their bare unfeeling environs. It is a familiar tale, and we read it in the case of Israel. The Jews enjoyed this advantage, that they came not to a strange land, but to one crowded with inspiring memories, and had behind them the most glorious impetus of prophecy which ever sent a people forward. Yet the ardours of this hurried them past a due appreciation of the difficulties they would have to en-

¹ Hag. i. 4.

counter, and when they found themselves on the stony soil of Judah, which they had been idealising for fifty years, and were afflicted by barren seasons, their hearts must have suffered an even more bitter disillusion than has so frequently come upon religious emigrants to a new coast.

I. THE CALL TO BUILD (Chap. i)

It was to this situation, upon an autumn day, when the colonists felt another year of effort behind them and their wretched harvest had been brought home, that Haggai addressed himself. With rare sense he confined his efforts to the needs of the moment. Modern sneers have not been spared upon a style, that is bare and esteemed a collapse of the prophetic spirit, in which Haggai ignored the achievements of his order and interpreted the word of God as a call to hew wood and lay stone upon stone. But the man felt what the moment needed, and that is the mark of the prophet. Set a prophet there, and what else could a prophet have done? It would have been futile to reawaken those splendid voices of the past, which in part had been the reason of the people's disappointment, and equally futile to interpret the mission of the Powers towards God's people. What God's people themselves could do for themselves—this was what needed telling; and if Haggai told this with a meagre style, that too was in harmony with the occasion. One does not expect it otherwise when hungry men speak to each other of their duty.

Nor does Haggai deserve blame that he interpreted the duty as the building of the Temple. This was no mere ecclesiastical function. Without the Temple the continuity of Israel's religion could not be maintained.

An independent state, with full courses of civic life, was impossible. The ethical spirit, the regard for each other and God, could prevail over material interests in no other way than by devotion to the worship of the God of their fathers. In urging them to build the Temple from their own resources, in abstaining from hopes of imperial patronage, in making the business one, not of sentiment nor of assurance from the promises of God, but of plain and hard duty—Haggai illustrated the sanity and the spiritual essence of prophecy.

Robertson Smith has contrasted the importance which Haggai attached to the Temple with the attitude of Isaiah and Jeremiah, to whom 'the religion of Israel and the holiness of Jerusalem have little to do with the edifice of the Temple. The city is holy because it is the seat of Jehovah's sovereignty on earth, exerted in His dealings with and for the state of Judah and the kingdom of David.'¹ Yet it must be pointed out that even to Isaiah the Temple was the dwelling of Yahweh, and if it had been lying in ruins at his feet, as at Haggai's, he would have been as earnest as Haggai in urging its reconstruction. Nor did the Second Isaiah, who has as spiritual an idea of the destiny of the people as any prophet, lay less emphasis on the importance of the Temple to their life, and the certainty of its future glory.

i. 1. *In the second year of Darius*² *the king, in the sixth month on the first day of the month—that is, on the feast of the new moon—the word of Yahweh came by*³ *Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel, son of She'alti'el,*⁴ *Satrap of Judah, and to Jehoshua', son of Jehoşadak,*⁵

¹ Art. 'Haggai,' *Encycl. Brit.*

² Heb. Daryavesh.

³ Heb. *by the hand of.*

⁴ See above, pp. 200 f. and 219

⁵ See below, pp. 254, 273, 285 ff.

the high priest—the civil and religious heads of the community—as follows¹ :—

i. 2-6. Thus hath Yahweh of Hosts spoken, saying : This people have said, Not yet² is come the time for the House of Yahweh to be built. So Yahweh's word is by Haggai the prophet, saying : Is it a time for you—you³—to be dwelling in houses cieled with planks,⁴ while this House is waste ? And now thus saith Yahweh of Hosts : Lay to heart how things have gone with you.⁵ Ye have sowed much but with little income, eaten but not to satisfaction, drunken and are not full, put on clothing and there is no warmth, while he that earns wages earns them into a bag with holes.

i. 7-II. Thus saith Yahweh of Hosts : ⁶ Go up into the mountain—the hill-country of Judah—and bring in timber, and build the House, that I may take pleasure in it, and get Me glory, saith Yahweh. There was looking for much and it has turned out little,⁷ and what ye brought home I blew upon.⁸ On account of what ?—Rede of Yahweh of Hosts—on account of My House which is waste, while ye hurry each after his own house. Therefore⁹ heaven has shut off the dew,¹⁰ and earth shut off her

¹ Heb. *saying*.

² For לֹא עֲתִיבָא = *not the time of coming* read with Hitzig and Wellhausen לֹא עַתָּ בָּא, *not now is come* ; for עַתָּ cf. Ezek. xxiii. 43.

³ The emphasis may be due to the awkward construction.

⁴ סְפוּנִים, from סָפַן, *to cover with cedar*, 1 Kings vi. 9 : cf. vii. 7.

⁵ Heb. *set your hearts upon your ways* ; *your ways* cannot mean, as elsewhere, *your conduct*, but from what follows *the ways* you have been led, *the way* things have gone with you.

⁶ The Hebrew and Versions here insert *set your hearts upon your ways*, obviously a clerical repetition from ver. 5.

⁷ For וְהָיָה לְמַעַט read with LXX וְהָיָה לְמַעַט or וְהָיָה.

⁸ Making it still worse.

⁹ The Hebrew text is unparseable, not in LXX and probably a dittography from the preceding עַל־כֵּן.

¹⁰ Heb. *heavens are shut from dew*. But the מ of מַטְל should be deleted (Wellhausen). There is no intransitive Qal of כָּלָא.

increase. And I have called drought on the earth, and on the mountains, and on the corn, and on the wine, and on the oil, and on all¹ the ground brings forth, and on man, and on beast, and on all the labour of the hands.

For us Haggai's appeal to the barren seasons and poverty of the people as proof of God's anger raises questions. But we have seen, not only that natural calamities were by the ancients interpreted as the Deity's instruments, but that through history they have had an influence on the spirits of men, forcing them to search their hearts and believe that Providence is conducted for other ends than their physical prosperity. 'Have not those who believed as Amos believed ever been the strong spirits of the race, making the disasters which crushed them to earth the tokens that God has great views about them?'² Haggai takes no sordid view of Providence when he interprets the seasons, from which his people had suffered, as God's anger on their selfishness and their delay in building His House.

The appeal to the conscience of the Jews had an immediate effect. Within three weeks they began work.

i. 12-15. *And Zerubbabel, son of Shaltî'el, and Jehoshua', son of Jehošadak, the high priest, and all the rest of the people, hearkened to the voice of Yahweh their God, and to the words of Haggai the prophet, as Yahweh had sent him to them;³ and the people feared before Yahweh. [And Haggai, the messenger of Yahweh, on Yahweh's mission to the people, spake, saying, I am with you—Rede of Yahweh.]⁴ And Yahweh stirred the spirit of Zerubbabel, son of Shaltî'el, Satrap of Judah, and the*

¹ So Heb. MSS. and Versions.

² Vol. I, pp. 164 ff.

³ So after the Versions; for the Heb. *their God*.

⁴ See above, p. 224.

*spirit of Jehoshua', son of Jehoşadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the rest of the people ; and they went and did work in the House of Yahweh of Hosts, their God, the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king.*¹

The narrative emphasises that the new energy was, as it could not but be from Haggai's unflattering words, a spiritual result. It was the *spirit* of Zerubbabel, the *spirit* of Jehoshua, and the *spirit* of the rest of the people which was stirred—their conscience and character. Not in vain had the people suffered their disillusion under Cyrus, if their history was to start again from sources so inward.

2. COURAGE, ZERUBBABEL ! COURAGE, JEHOŞHUA AND ALL THE PEOPLE ! (Chap. ii. 1-9)

The second occasion on which Haggai spoke to the people was another feast the same autumn, the seventh day of the Feast of Tabernacles,² the twenty-first of the seventh month. For nearly four weeks the work on the Temple had proceeded. Progress must have been made, for comparisons became possible between the old Temple and the state of this one. Probably the outlines of the building were visible. In any case it was enough to discourage the builders with their efforts and their means. Haggai's new word is a simple one of encouragement. The people's conscience had been stirred ; they needed some hope. Consequently he appeals to what he had ignored, the political possibilities which the state of the world afforded—always a source of prophetic promise. But again he makes his call upon their courage and resources. The Hebrew

¹ The LXX takes this verse of i as the first half of ii. 1.

² Lev. xxiii. 34, 36, 40-42.

contains a reference to the Exodus which would be appropriate to a discourse during the Feast of Tabernacles, but this is not found in the Septuagint, and is so impossible to construe that it has been justly suspected as inserted by a later hand, because the passage deals with the Feast of Tabernacles.

ii. 1-9. *In the seventh month, on the twenty-first day, the word of Yahweh came by¹ Haggai the prophet, saying :—*

Speak now to Zerubbabel, son of Shaltî'el, Satrap of Judah, and to Jehoshua', son of Jehoşadaḳ, the high priest, and to the rest of the people, saying : Who among you is left that saw this House in its former glory, and how see you it now ? Is it not as nothing in your eyes ?² And now courage,³ O Zerubbabel—Rede of Yahweh—and courage, Jehoshua', son of Jehoşadaḳ, the high priest ;⁴ and courage, all people of the land !—Rede of Yahweh ; and get to work, for I am with you—Rede of Yahweh of Hosts⁵—and My Spirit is standing in your midst. Fear not ! For thus saith Yahweh of Hosts : But a little while, and I will shake heaven, and earth and sea and the dry land. I will shake all nations, and the costly things of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this House with glory, saith Yahweh of Hosts. Mine the

¹ *By the hand of.*

² הֲלֹא כְמוֹהוּ כִּי אֵין בְּעֵינֵיכֶם. Lit. *is not the like of it as nothing in your eyes ?* But that can hardly be the meaning. It might equal *is it not, as it stands, as nothing in your eyes ?* The fact is that in Heb. construction of a simple, unemphasised comparison, the comparing particle כִּי stands before *both* objects compared : as e.g., in Gen. xliv. 18, כִּי כְמוֹדָהּ כִּפְרָעֹה, *thou art as Pharaoh.*

³ Lit. *be strong.*

⁴ It is difficult to say whether *high priest* belongs to the text or not.

⁵ Here the anacolouthic clause, introduced by an acc. without a verb, not found in the LXX and probably a gloss (see above on this page) : *The promise I made with you in your going forth from Egypt.*

*silver and Mine the gold—Rede of Yahweh of Hosts. Greater shall the latter glory of this House be than the former, saith Yahweh of Hosts, and in this place will I give peace*¹—Rede of Yahweh of Hosts.

From the earliest times this passage, by the majority of the Christian Church, has been interpreted of Christ. The Vulgate renders 7b, *Et veniet Desideratus cunctis gentibus*, and so a number of Latin Fathers, followed by Luther, *Der Trost aller Heiden*, and our own Version, *And the Desire of all nations shall come*. This was not contrary to Jewish tradition, for Rabbi Akiba defined the clause of the Messiah, and Jerome received the interpretation from his Jewish instructors. In itself the noun, as pointed in the text, means *longing* or *object of longing*.² But the verb with it is in the plural, and by a change of points the noun may be read as a plural.³ That this was the original is made probable by the fact that it lay before the Greek translators, who render : *the picked, or chosen, things of the nations*.⁴ So the Italic version : *Et venient omnia electa gentium*.⁵

¹ The LXX adds a parallel clause καὶ εἰρήνην ψυχῆς εἰς περιποίησιν παντὶ τῷ κτίζοντι τοῦ ἀναστῆσαι τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον, which would read in Hebrew חַיִּית נַפְשׁ לְחַיִּית כָּל־הַיָּסֵד לְקוֹמָם הַיִּסְדֵּךְ הַזֶּה. On חַיִּית Wellhausen cites 1 Chron. xi. 8 = *restore* or *revive*.

² חֲמֻדָּה = *longing*, 2 Chron. xxi. 2, and *object of longing*, Dan. xi. 37. It is the feminine or neuter, and might be rendered as a collective, *desirable things*. Pusey cites Cicero's address to his wife : *Valete, mea desideria, valete* (*Ep. ad Famil.*, xiv. 2 fin.).

³ חֲמֻדָּה, plur. fem. of pass. part., as in Gen. xxvii. 15, where it is an adjective, but used as a noun = *precious things*, Dan. xi. 38, 43, which use meets the objection of Pusey, *in loco*, where he wrongly maintains that *precious things*, if intended, must have been expressed by מַחְמְדֵי.

⁴ ἡξει τὰ ἐκλεκτὰ πάντων τῶν ἐθνῶν. Theodore of Mopsuestia takes it as *select persons of all nations*, to which a few moderns adhere.

⁵ Augustini, *Contra Donatistas post Collationem*, cap. xx. 30 (Migne, *Latin Patrology*, XLIII, p. 671).

Moreover this meaning suits the context, as the other does not. The next verse mentions silver and gold. 'We may understand what he says,' writes Calvin, 'of Christ; we know that Christ was the expectation of the world; . . . but as it immediately follows, *Mine is the silver and Mine the gold*, the simple meaning is what I first stated: that the nations would come, bringing all their riches, that they might offer themselves and their possessions a sacrifice to God.'¹

3. THE POWER OF THE UNCLEAN (Chap. ii. 10-19)

Haggai's third address to the people is based on a deliverance which he seeks from the priests. Deuteronomy had provided that, in difficult cases not settled by its code, the people shall seek a *deliverance* or *Torah* from the priests, *and shall observe to do according to the deliverance the priests deliver to thee*.² Both noun and verb, which may be thus translated, are also used for the complete and canon Law in Israel, and signify that in the time of the composition of Deuteronomy this Law was still regarded as in process of growth. So too in the time of Haggai: he does not consult a code, nor asks the priests what the canon says, as our Lord does with the question, *how readest thou?* But he begs them to give him a *Torah* or *deliverance*,³ based of course upon existing custom, but not committed to writing.⁴ For the history of the Law this is a passage of great interest.

¹ Calvin, *Comm. in Haggai*, II, pp. 6-9.

² Deut. xvii. 8 ff.: עַל־פִּי הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר יִדְרֹק . Compare the phrase בִּזְהֵן מוֹרֶה , 2 Chron. xv. 3, and the duties of the teaching priests assigned (2 Chron. xvii. 7-9) to Jehoshaphat.

³ Note that it is not *the Torah*, but *a Torah*.

⁴ The nearest passage to the *deliverance* of the priests to Haggai is Lev. vi. 20, 21 (Heb.), 27, 28 (Eng.), part of the Priestly Code not pro-

ii. 10-13. *On the twenty-fourth of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of Yahweh came to¹ Haggai the prophet, saying: Thus saith Yahweh of Hosts, Ask now of the priests a deliverance,² saying:—If a man be carrying flesh that is holy in the skirt of his robe, and with his skirt touch bread or pottage or wine or oil or any food, shall the latter become holy? And the priests gave answer and said, No! And Haggai said, If one unclean by a corpse³ touch any of these, shall the latter become unclean? And the priests gave answer and said, It shall be unclean. That is, holiness which passed from the source to an object immediately in touch with the latter did not spread further; but pollution infected not only the person in contact with it, but whatever he touched.⁴ 'The flesh of the sacrifice hallowed whatever it should touch, but not further;⁵ but the human being, defiled by touching a dead body, defiled all he might touch.'⁶*

ii. 14. *And Haggai answered and said: So is this people, and so this nation before Me—Rede of Yahweh—and so all the work of their hands, and what they offer*

mulgated till 445 B.C., but based on long extant custom, some of it ancient. *All that touches the flesh* (of the sin-offering, which is holy) *shall be holy—יִקְדָּשׁ*, the verb used by the priests to Haggai—and *when any of its blood has been sprinkled on a garment, that whereon it was sprinkled shall be washed in a holy place. The earthen vessel wherein it has been boiled shall be broken, and if it has been boiled in a brazen vessel, this shall be scoured and rinsed with water.*

¹ So several old edd. and many codd., adopted by Baer (see his note *in loco*) in his text. But most edd. of the Massoretic text read בִּיד after Cod. Hill. For the importance of the question see p. 225.

² Torah.

³ תִּמְאָה נֶפֶשׁ.

⁴ There does not appear to be the contrast between indirect contact with a holy thing and direct contact with a polluted which Wellhausen affirms. In either case the articles whose character is in question stand second from the source of holiness or pollution.

⁵ See above, p. 240, n. 2.

⁶ Pusey, *in loco*.

there—at the altar erected on its old site—is *unclean*.¹ The Jews had expected the restored ritual to make them holy to the Lord, but this had not been effective, while, on the contrary, their contact with pollution had polluted both themselves, their labour and sacrifices. What the sources of pollution were is not stated, but Haggai, from his other messages, can only mean, either want of energy in building the Temple, or the unbuilt Temple. André goes so far as to compare the latter with the corpse, whose touch, according to the priests, spreads infection through more than one degree. In any case Haggai means to enforce the building of the Temple without delay; and meantime takes one instance of the effect he has already spoken of, *the work of their hands*, and shows how it has been spoilt by their neglect.

ii. 15-19. *And now, I pray, set your hearts backward from to-day,*² *before stone was laid upon stone in the Temple of Yahweh. How were you*³ *then?—when one came to a heap of grain of twenty measures, and it had become ten, or went to the winevat to draw fifty measures,*⁴

¹ LXX here found three other clauses: ἕνεκεν τῶν λημμάτων αὐτῶν τῶν ὀρθρινῶν, ὀδυνηθήσονται ἀπὸ προσώπου πόνων αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐμισεῖτε ἐν πύλαις ἐλέγχοντας. The first is a mis-reading (Wellhausen), יַעַן לִקְחֶתֶם שֹׁחַד, *because ye take a bribe*, and goes well with the third from Amos v. 10: שִׁנְאוּ בְּשַׁעַר מוֹכִיחַ, *they hate him who reproves in the gate*. These may have been inserted in the Heb. by one puzzled to know the source of the pollution, who absurdly found it in sins which in Haggai's time it was impossible to impute. The middle clause, יִתְעַנּוּ מִפְּנֵי עֲצָבֵיהֶם, *they vex them with their labours*, suits the Hebrew text (Wellhausen), but besides gives connection with what follows.

² From this day and upwards.

³ Heb. מִהֵיוֹתָם, *since they were*, but read מִהֵיוֹתָם after LXX.

⁴ Winevat, יִקֵּב, distinguished from winepress, נֵת, in Josh. ix. 13, and translated by Greek ὑπολήνιον Mark xii. 1, ληνόν Matt. xxi. 33.

and it had become twenty. I smote you with blasting and with withering,¹ and with hail all the work of your hands, and . . .²—Rede of Yahweh. Lay now your hearts on the time before to-day³ (the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month⁴), before the day of the foundation of the Temple of Yahweh⁵—lay your hearts to that time. Is

dug a pit for the winepress; but the name is applied sometimes to the whole winepress—Hosea ix. 2, etc., Job xxiv. 11, to tread the winepress. The word translated *measures*, LXX, μετρητάς, is פִּזְרָה, and properly the vat in which grapes were trodden (Isa. lxiii. 3); here it cannot mean *vatfuls*, but must refer to a smaller measure—cask?

¹ See above, p. 226, n. 4.

² The words omitted cannot be construed, וְאִי־אַתֶּם אֵלַי, lit. *and not you (acc.) to Me*. Hitzig, etc., read אַתֶּם and render *none was with you who turned to Me*. Others אִינֶם, as if *none of you turned to Me*. Others retain אַתֶּם and render *as for you*. LXX, Syr., Vulg., *ye will not return or did not return to Me*, reading for אַתֶּם אִין שְׁבַתֶּם, לא שְׁבַתֶּם, found in Amos iv. 9, which the rest of the verse echoes. Wellhausen deletes the verse as a gloss. It is suspicious, and remarkable that LXX has already introduced two citations from Amos. See on ver. 14.

³ Heb. *from this day upwards*.

⁴ The date Wellhausen thinks was added by a later hand.

⁵ This is the clause on different interpretations of which much has been founded: לְמֶן־הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר־יָסַד הֵיכַל־יְהוָה. Does it, in parallel to the previous clause, describe the day on which Haggai was speaking, *the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month*, the *terminus a quo* of the people's retrospect? If so Haggai regards the foundation-stone of the Temple as laid on the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month 520 B.C., and does not know any previous laying of a foundation-stone. So Kuenen, Kusters, André, etc. Or does לְמֶן signify *up to the time the foundation-stone was laid*, and state a *terminus ad quem* for the people's retrospect? So Ewald, etc., who find in the verse proof that Haggai knew of an earlier laying. But that לְמֶן is ever used for וְעַד is disproved by Jer. vii. 7, where it is in contrast to וְעַד. Van Hoonacker finds the same, but in a more subtle translation of לְמֶן. מֶן, he says, is never used except of a date distant from the speaker; לְמֶן refers therefore to a date previous to Haggai to which the people's thoughts are directed by the ל and then brought back from it to the date at which he was

there yet any seed in the barn ?¹ And as yet² the vine, the fig, the pomegranate and the olive tree have not borne fruit. From this day I will bless.

This then is the message. On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in our December, the Jews had been discouraged that their attempts to build the Temple, begun three months before,³ had not turned the tide of misfortune and produced prosperity. Haggai tells them, there is no time for the change to work. If contact with a holy thing has but a slight effect, but contact with the unclean a much greater (II-13), then their attempts to build the Temple have less good influence on their condition than the bad influence of their past devotion to themselves. That is why adversity still continues, but courage ! from this day on God will bless. The message is thus opportune to the date at which it was delivered, and comes naturally

speaking by means of the מן : ' la preposition ל signifies la direction de l'esprit vers une époque du passé d'où il est ramené par la preposition מן . ' But מן can be used (as Haggai has just used it) to signify extension backwards from the standpoint of the speaker ; and although in the passages cited by Van Hoonacker of the use of למן it refers to a past date—Deut. ix. 7, Judg. xix. 30, 2 Sam. vi. 11, Jer. vii. 7 and 25—still, as it is there but a pleonastic form for מן , it might be employed as מן is employed for departure from the present backwards. Nor in any case is it used to express what Van Hoonacker draws from it here, direction of the mind to a past event and an immediate return from this. Had Haggai wished to express that idea he would have phrased it thus : למן היום אשר יבד היכל יהוה ועד היום הזה (Kosters). Besides (Kosters, pp. 7 ff. of the Germ. trans. of *Het Herstel*, etc.), even if Van Hoonacker's translation of למן were correct, the context would show that it might refer only to a laying of the foundation-stone since Haggai's first address to the people, and the question of a foundation-stone under Cyrus would remain unsolved. So ii. 18 cannot be quoted as a proof of the latter. See above, p. 215.

¹ Meaning *there is none*.

² ועוד or יעד for יעד , after LXX, καὶ ἐτι.

³ The twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, according to i. 15.

on the back of Haggai's previous oracles. André's reason for assigning it to another, because it breaks the connection, does not exist.¹

These poor colonists, in their hope deferred, were learning the lesson, which humanity finds hard, that repentance and new-born zeal do not immediately change our material condition ; but the consequences of sin often outweigh the influence of conversion, and though devoted to God and industrious we may still be punished for a sinful past. Evil has an infection greater than holiness. Its results are more extensive and lasting. By no casuistry did Haggai appeal to the priests, but by ethical truth embedded in human experience.

4. THE REINVESTMENT OF ISRAEL'S HOPE (Chap. ii. 20-23)

On the same day Haggai published another oracle, in which he put the climax to his message, reinvesting in Zerubbabel the ancient hopes of his people. When the monarchy fell the Messianic hopes were no longer concentrated in the person of a king ; and the evangelist of the Exile found the elect and anointed Servant of Yahweh in the people as a whole, or in at least the pious part of them, with functions not of government but of influence and instruction for all peoples of the earth. In the Exile Ezekiel still predicted an individual Messiah, a son of the house of David ; only it is significant that, in his latest prophecies after the overthrow of Jerusalem, Ezekiel calls him not *king* ² any more, but *prince*.³

¹ See above, p. 226.

² Only in xxxiv. 24 : cf. xxxvii. 22, 24.

³ נָשִׂיא : cf. Skinner, *Ezekiel* (Expositor's Bible Series), pp. 447 ff., who, however, attributes the diminution of the importance of the civil head in Israel, not to the feeling that he would henceforth be subject to a foreign emperor, but to the conviction that he will be overshadowed by the personal presence of Yahweh in His people.

After the return of Sheshbazzar to Babylon this position was filled by Zerubbabel, grandson of Jehoiakin (the second last king of Judah), appointed by the Persian king Peḥah or Satrap of Judah. Him Haggai now names the elect servant of Yahweh. In that overturning of the kingdoms which Haggai had predicted two months before, and now explains as their mutual destruction in war, Yahweh will make Zerubbabel His signet-ring, inseparable from Himself and the symbol of His authority.

ii. 20–23. *And the word of Yahweh came a second time to*¹ *Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, saying: Speak to Zerubbabel, Satrap of Judah, saying: I am about to shake the heavens and the earth,*² *and I will overturn the thrones*³ *of kingdoms, and will shatter the power of the kingdoms of the nations, and will overturn chariots*⁴ *and their riders, and horses and their riders will come down, every man by the sword of his brother. In that day—Rede of Yahweh of Hosts—I will take thee Zerubbabel, son of She'altî'el, My servant—Rede of Yahweh—and will make thee like a signet-ring; for thee have I chosen—Rede of Yahweh of Hosts.*

The wars and mutual destruction of the Gentiles, of which Haggai speaks, are doubtless those revolts of races and provinces which threatened to disrupt the Persian Empire on the accession of Darius in 521. Persians, Babylonians, Medes, Armenians, the Sacæ and others rose together or in succession. In four years Darius quelled them all and reorganised his empire before the Jews finished their Temple. Like other Syrian governors, Zerubbabel remained his lieutenant and submissive tributary. History rolled

¹ See above, p. 223.

² LXX enlarges: *and the sea and the dry land.*

³ Heb. sing. collect. LXX plural.

⁴ Again a sing. collect.

westward into Europe. Greek and Persian began their struggle for the control of its future, and the Jews fell into an obscurity unbroken for centuries. The *signet-ring of Yahweh* was not acknowledged by the world—does not seem even to have challenged its attention. But Haggai had succeeded in asserting the Messianic hope of Israel, always baffled, never quenched, in this re-opening of her life. He had delivered the ancient heritage of Israel to the care of the new Judaism.

Haggai's place in the succession of prophecy ought now to be clear to us. The meagreness of his words and their crabbed style, his occupation with the construction of the Temple, his unfulfilled hope in Zerubbabel, his silence on the inheritance of truth delivered by his predecessors, and the absence from his prophesying of visions of God's character and of emphasis upon the ethical elements of religion, have moved some to depress his value as a prophet almost to the vanishing point. Nothing could be more unjust. In his opening message Haggai evinced the first indispensable power of the prophet: to speak to the situation of the moment, and to succeed in getting men to take up the duty at their feet; in another message he announced a great ethical principle; in his last he conserved the Messianic traditions of his religion, and though not less disappointed than Isaiah in the personality to whom he looked for their fulfilment, he succeeded in passing on their hope to future ages.

ZECHARIAE

(i-viii)

Not by might, and not by force, but by My Spirit, saith Yahweh of Hosts.

Be not afraid, strengthen your hands ! Speak truth, every man to his neighbour ; truth and wholesome judgement judge ye in your gates, and in your hearts plan no evil for each other, nor take pleasure in false swearing, for all these things do I hate—Rede of Yahweh.

CHAPTER XIX

THE BOOK OF ZECHARIAH (I-VIII)

THE Book of Zechariah, consisting of fourteen chapters, falls into two divisions: *First*, chs. i-viii, ascribed to Zechariah himself and full of evidence for their authenticity; *Second*, chs. ix-xiv, which are not ascribed to Zechariah, and deal with conditions different from those upon which he worked. The discussion of the date and character of this second section we reserve till we reach the period at which we believe it was written. Here an introduction is necessary only to chs. i-viii.

These chapters may be divided into five sections:—

I. Ch. i. 1-6. A Word of Yahweh which came to Zechariah in the eighth month of the second year of Darius, that is in November, 520 B.C., or between the second and third oracles of Haggai.¹ The prophet's place is affirmed in the succession of the prophets. The ancient prophets are gone, but their predictions have been fulfilled in the calamities of the Exile, and God's Word abides for ever.

II. Ch. i. 7-vi. 9. A word of Yahweh to Zechariah on the twenty-fourth of the eleventh month of the same Jewish year, January or February, 519, and which he reproduces in the form of eight Visions. (1) The Vision of the Four Horsemen: God's new mercies to Jerusalem (i. 7-17). (2) The Vision of the Four Horns, or Powers of the World, and the Four Smiths, who smite them (ii. 1-4 Heb., but in LXX and the English

¹ See above, pp. 223 ff.

Version i. 18-21). (3) The Vision of the Man with the Measuring Rope: Jerusalem shall be rebuilt, no longer as a narrow fortress, but spread abroad for the multitude of her population (ii. 5-9 Heb., ii. 1-5 LXX and Eng.). To this is appended a lyric, probably older, calling on the Jews in Babylon to return, and celebrating the joining of many peoples to Yahweh, now that He takes again His habitation in Jerusalem (ii. 10-17 Heb., ii. 6-13 LXX and Eng.). (4) The Vision of Joshua, the High Priest, and the Satan or Accuser: the Satan is rebuked, and Joshua cleansed from his foul garments and clothed with a new turban and apparel; the land is purged and secure (iii). (5) The Vision of the Seven-Branched Lamp and the Two Olive-Trees (iv. 1-6*a*, 10*b*-14): into the centre has been inserted a Word of Yahweh to Zerubbabel (vv. 6*b*-10*a*), which interrupts the Vision and ought to come at the close of it. (6) The Vision of the Flying Book: it is the curse of the land, which is being removed, but after destroying the houses of the wicked (v. 1-4). (7) The Vision of the Bushel and the Woman: that is the guilt of the land and wickedness; carried off and planted in the land of Shinar (v. 5-11). (8) The Vision of the Four Chariots: they go forth from the Lord of the earth, to traverse the earth and bring His Spirit, or anger, to bear on the North (vi. 1-8).

III. Ch. vi. 9-15. A word of Yahweh, undated (unless to be taken as of the date of the Visions to which it is attached), giving directions about the gifts sent to the community at Jerusalem from Babylonian Jews. A crown is to be made, and, according to the text, placed upon the head of Joshua. But, as we shall see,¹ the text gives signs of having been altered in the interest of the High Priest; and probably the crown was for Zerubbabel, at whose right hand the priest is to stand, and there shall be a counsel of peace between the two. The far-away shall come and assist the building of the Temple. This section breaks off in the middle of a sentence.

IV. Ch. vii. The Word of Yahweh to Zechariah on the fourth of the ninth month of the fourth year of Darius, nearly two years after the Visions. The Temple approached completion; an inquiry was addressed to the priests in it and the prophets concerning the Fasts maintained during the Exile,

¹ Below, pp. 299 f.

while the Temple lay desolate (vii. 1-3). This inquiry drew from Zechariah an explanation of how the Fasts arose (vii. 4-14).

V. Ch. viii. Ten undated oracles, introduced by the formula, *Thus saith Yahweh of Hosts*, and summarising Zechariah's teaching since before the Temple began up to the question of the cessation of the Fasts on its completion—with promises for the future. (1) A Word affirming Yahweh's new zeal for Jerusalem and His Return to her (vv. 1, 2). (2) Another of the same (ver. 3). (3) A Word promising fullness of old folk and children in her streets (vv. 4, 5). (4) A Word affirming that nothing is too wonderful for Yahweh (ver. 6). (5) A Word promising the return of the people from east and west (vv. 7, 8). (6 and 7) Two Words contrasting, in terms similar to Haggai i, the poverty of the people before the foundation of the Temple with their new prosperity: from a curse Israel shall become a blessing. This is due to God's anger having changed into a purpose of grace. But the people must do truth and justice, cease from perjury and thoughts of evil against each other (vv. 9-17). (8) A Word which recurs to the question of Fasting, and commands that the four great Fasts, instituted to commemorate the overthrow of Jerusalem, and murder of Gedaliah, be changed to joy (vv. 18, 19). (9) A Word predicting the coming of the Gentiles to worship Yahweh at Jerusalem (vv. 20-22). (10) Another of the same (ver. 23).

There is no doubt that, apart from a few interpolations, these eight chapters are genuine prophecies of Zechariah, who is mentioned in the Book of Ezra as the colleague of Haggai and contemporary of Zerubbabel and Joshua at the time of the rebuilding of the Temple.¹ Like those of Haggai, these prophecies are dated by the years of Darius the king, from his second to his fourth. Although they may contain some of the exhortations to build the Temple, which the Book of Ezra informs us Zechariah made along with Haggai, the most presuppose progress in the work,

¹ Ezra v. 1, vi. 14.

and seek to assist it by retrospect and by glowing hopes of the Messianic effects of its completion. Their allusions suit the years to which they are assigned. Darius is king. The Exile has lasted about seventy years.¹ Numbers of Jews remain in Babylon,² and are scattered over the rest of the world.³ The community at Jerusalem is small and weak : it is the mere colony of young men and men in middle life who came from Babylon ; few are the children and old folk.⁴ Joshua and Zerubbabel are the heads of the community, and the pledges for its future.⁵ The conditions which Haggai spoke of a few years before⁶ are recalled as recent. Moreover, there is an orderly progress through the prophecies, in harmony with the dates at which they were delivered. In November, 520, they begin with a cry to repentance and lessons from the past of prophecy.⁷ In January, 519, Temple and City are still to be built.⁸ Zerubbabel has laid the foundation ; the completion is future.⁹ The prophet's duty is to quiet the people's apprehensions about the state of the world,¹⁰ to provoke their zeal,¹¹ give them confidence in their great men,¹² and, above all, assure them that God is returned to them¹³ and their sin pardoned.¹⁴ But in December, 518, the Temple is so far built that the priests are said to belong to it ;¹⁵ there is no need to continue the fasts of the Exile,¹⁶ the future has opened and is bright with Messianic hopes.¹⁷ Most of

¹ i. 12, vii. 5 : reckoning in round numbers from 590, between the Exiles of 597 and 586, brings us to 520, the 2nd year of Darius.

² ii. 6 (Eng., Heb. 10). On the question whether the Book of Zechariah gives evidence of a previous Return see pp. 208 ff.

³ viii. 7, etc.

⁴ viii. 4, 5.

⁵ iii. 1-10, iv. 6-10, vi. 11 ff.

⁶ viii. 9, 10.

⁷ i. 1-6.

⁸ i. 7-17.

⁹ iv. 6-10.

¹⁰ i. 7-21 (Eng., Heb. i. 7-ii. 4).

¹¹ iv. 6 ff.

¹² iii, iv.

¹³ j. 16.

¹⁴ v.

¹⁵ vii. 3.

¹⁶ vii. 1-7, viii. 18, 19.

¹⁷ viii. 20-23.

all, it is felt that the hard struggle with nature is over, and the people are exhorted to the virtues of the civic life.¹ They have time to lift their eyes from their work and see the nations come from afar to Jerusalem.²

These features leave no room for doubt that the bulk of the first eight chapters of the Book of Zechariah are by the prophet himself, and from the years to which he assigns them, November, 520, to December, 518. The point requires no argument.³

There are, however, three passages which provoke further examination—two of them because of the signs they bear of an earlier date, and one because of the alteration it has suffered in the interests of a later day in Israel's history.

The lyric appended to the Second Vision (ii. 10-17 Heb., 6-13 LXX and Eng.) suggests questions by its singularity: there is no other such among the Visions. In addition it speaks not only of the Return from Babylon as future⁴—this might still be said after the First Return of the exiles in 536⁵—but it differs from the language of the Visions proper in describing the return of Yahweh Himself to Şion as still future. The whole, too, has the ring of the odes in Isaiah xl-lv, and seems to reflect the same situation, upon the eve of the conquest of Babylon. Either we have here inserted, among Zechariah's visions and by Zechariah himself or by a later hand, a song of twenty years earlier,⁶ possibly Zechariah's own; or as some think Zechariah, with the influence of Second Isaiah upon

¹ viii. 16, 17.

² viii. 20-23.

³ This has been and is generally felt.

⁴ ii. 10 f. Heb., 6 f. LXX and Eng.

⁵ For Heb. *I have scattered you as the four winds of heaven* read with LXX *From the four winds . . . I gather you*.

⁶ A. R. Gordon, 'an earlier song'; Duhm finds one in vv. 10a, 11 and possibly in 14.

him, and in view of the fact that there were still a multitude of Jews in exile, in 519-517, was moved to burst into song during the course of his visions or while writing them down.¹

Again, there are the two passages called the Word of Yahweh to Zerubbabel, iv. 6b-10a; and the Word of Yahweh concerning the gifts from the Jews in Babylon, vi. 9-15. The first, as Wellhausen has shown,² is out of place; it disturbs the narrative of the Vision, and is to be put at the end of the latter. The second is undated, and separate from the Visions; it affirms that the building of the Temple is still future. The man whose name is Branch or Shoot is designated: *he shall build the Temple of Yahweh*. The first is in the temper of the first two oracles of Haggai. It is possible then that these two passages are not, like the Visions with which they are taken, to be dated from 519, but represent that earlier prophesying of Zechariah with which we are told he assisted Haggai in instigating the people to begin to build the Temple.

The style of Zechariah betrays special features almost only in the narrative of the Visions. Outside these his language is simple, direct and pure, as it could not but be, considering how much is drawn from, or modelled upon, older prophets,³ chiefly Hosea and Jeremiah.

¹ Wellhausen, Driver, Marti, Budde (*Gesch.*, 171). See above, p. 211.

² See below, p. 292.

³ Outside the Visions the prophecies contain these echoes of earlier writers: i. 1-6 quotes the constant refrain of prophetic preaching before the Exile, and in vii. 7-14 (ver. 8 must be deleted) is given a summary of that preaching; in viii ver. 3 echoes Isa. i. 21, 26, *city of troth*, and Jer. xxxi. 23, *mountain of holiness* (there is no connection, as Kuenen holds, between 4 and Isa. lxxv. 20; if there were it would create more interesting questions as to the date of the latter; 8 is based on Hos. ii. 15 Heb. (19 Eng.), and Jer. xxxi. 33; 12 on Hos. ii. 21 f. (Heb. 23 f.); with 13 compare Jer. xlii. 18, *a curse*; 21 ff. with Isa. ii. 3 and Mic. iv. 2.

One or two lapses into a careless and degenerate dialect show how the prophet might have written, had he not been sustained by the music of the classical periods of the language.¹

This directness and pith is not shared by the language in which the Visions are narrated.² Here the style is involved and redundant. The syntax is loose; there is a frequent omission of the copula, and of other means by which, in better Hebrew, connection and conciseness are sustained. The formulas, *thus saith* and *saying*, are repeated to weariness. How much of this was due to Zechariah himself? Take the Septuagint version. The Hebrew text, which it followed, not only included a number of repetitions of the formulas, and of the designations of the personages introduced in the Visions, which do not occur in the Massoretic text,³ but omitted some which are found in the Massoretic text.⁴ These two sets of phenomena prove that from an early date the copiers of the original text of Zechariah were busy in increasing its redundancies. Further, there are still earlier intrusions and expansions, for these are shared by both the Hebrew and the Greek texts: some of them natural efforts to clear up the personages and conversations recorded in the dreams,⁵ some of them

¹ *E.g.*, vii. 5, צִמְתָּנִי אָנִי, for צִמְתָּם לִי: cf. Ewald, *Syntax*, § 315b.

The curious use of the acc. in the following verse is perhaps only apparent; part of the text may have fallen out.

² Though there are not wanting, of course, echoes here as in the others prophecies of older writings, *e.g.*, i. 12, 17.

³ לֵאמֹר, *saying*, ii. 8. (Gr. ii. 4), iv. 5. *And the angel who spoke with me said*: i. 17, cf. vi. 5. *All* is inserted in i. 11, iii. 9; *lord* in ii. 2; *of hosts* (after *Yahweh*), viii. 17; and there are other instances of palpable expansion, *e.g.*, i. 6, 8, ii. 4 bis, 6, viii. 19.

⁴ *E.g.*, ii. 2, iv. 2, 13, v. 9, vi. 12 bis, vii. 8: cf. also vi. 13.

⁵ i. 8 ff., iii. 4 ff.: cf. also vi. 3 with vv. 6 f.

mistakes in understanding the argument.¹ There must of course have been a certain amount of redundancy in the original to provoke such aggravations of it, and of obscurity or tortuousness of style to cause them to be deemed necessary. But it would be unjust to charge all the faults of our text to Zechariah himself, especially when we find force and simplicity in the passages outside the Visions. Of course the involved and misty subjects of the latter naturally forced upon the description of them a laboriousness of art, to which there was no provocation in directly exhorting the people, or in straightforward predictions of the Messianic era.

Beyond the corruptions due to these causes, the text of i-viii has not suffered more than that of other prophets. There are one or two clerical errors;² an occasional preposition or person of a verb needs to be amended. Here and there the text is disarranged;³ and, as noticed, one serious alteration of the original.⁴

From the foregoing it must be apparent what help and hindrance in the reconstruction of the text is furnished by the Septuagint. A list of its variant readings and of its mistranslations is appended.⁵

¹ *E.g.*, (but this is outside the Visions) the very flagrant misunderstanding to which the insertion of vii. 7 is due.

² v. 6, עֵינָם for עֵינָם as in LXX, and the last word of v. 11; perhaps vi. 10; and almost certainly vii. 2a.

³ Ch. iv. On 6a, 10b-14 should immediately follow, and 6b-10a come after 14.

⁴ vi. 11 ff. See below, pp. 299 f.

⁵ Chief variants: i. 8, 10; ii. 15; iii. 4; iv. 7, 12; v. 1, 3, 4, 9; vi. 10, 13; vii. 3; viii. 8, 9, 12, 20. Obvious mistranslations or misreadings: ii. 9, 10, 15, 17; iii. 4; iv. 7, 10; v. 1, 4, 9; vi. 10, cf. 14; vii. 3.

CHAPTER XX

ZECHARIAH THE PROPHET

ZECHARIAH I. 1-6, ETC.; EZRA V. I, VI. 14

ZECHARIAH is one of the prophets whose personality as distinguished from their message exerts some degree of fascination. This is not due, as in the case of Hosea or Jeremiah, to the facts of his life, for of these we know little; but to conflicting symptoms of character appearing in his prophecies.

His name was common in Israel, Zekher-Yah, *Yahweh remembers*.¹ In his own book he is described as *the son of Berekh-Yah, the son of Iddo*,² and in the Aramaic document of the Book of Ezra as *the son of Iddo*.³ Some suppose that Berekhyah was the actual father of the prophet, but that either he died early, leaving Zechariah to the care of the grandfather, or else that he was a man of no note, and Iddo was naturally mentioned as the head of the family. There are several instances of men being called the sons of their grandfathers:⁴ as in these cases the grandfather was the

¹ זְכַרְיָה; LXX, Ζαχαρίας.

² i. 1: בְּרֶכְיָהוּ בֶן-יְדֹא. In i. 7: בְּרֶכְיָהוּ בֶן-יְדֹא.

³ Ezra v. I, vi. 14: בְּרֶכְיָהוּ.

⁴ Gen. xxiv. 47, cf. xxix. 5; 1 Kings xix. 16, cf. 2 Kings ix. 14, 20.

reputed founder of the house, so in that of Zechariah Iddo was the head of his family when it came out of Babylon and was planted in Jerusalem. Others, however, have contested the genuineness of the words *son of Berekh-Yah*, and have traced them to a confusion of the prophet with Zechariah son of Yëbherekh-Yahu, the contemporary of Isaiah.¹ This is precarious, while the other hypothesis is natural.² Whichever be correct, the prophet Zechariah was a member of the priestly family of Iddo, that came up from Babylon under Cyrus.³ The Book of Nehemiah adds that in the high-priesthood of Yoyakim, the son of Jeshua, the head of the house of Iddo was a Zechariah.⁴ If this be our prophet, he was probably a youth in 520,⁵ and had come up as a child in the caravans from Babylon. The Aramaic document of the Book of Ezra⁶ assigns to Zechariah a share with Haggai in the work of instigating Zerubbabel and Jeshua to begin the Temple. None of his oracles is dated previous to the beginning of the work in August, 520, but we have seen⁷ that among those undated are one or two which by referring to the building of the Temple as still future may contain relics of that first stage of his ministry. From November, 520, we have the first of his dated oracles ;

¹ Isa. viii. 2 : בְּזַרְיָבֶרֶךְ יָהוּ . This confusion, which existed in early Jewish and Christian times, Knobel, Von Ortenberg, Bleek, Wellhausen and others take to be due to the effort to find a second Zechariah for the authorship of chs. ix. ff.

² So Vatke, König and many others. Marti prefers it (*Der Prophet Sacharja*, p. 58). See also Ryle on Ezra v. 1.

³ Neh. xii. 4.

⁴ *Id.* 16.

⁵ This is not proved, as Pusey, König (*Einl.*, p. 364), etc., think, by נַעַר, *youth*, of the Third Vision (ii. 8 Heb., ii. 4 LXX, Eng.). Cf. Wright,

Zechariah and his Prophecies, p. xvi.

⁶ v. 1, vi. 14.

⁷ Above, p. 256.

his Visions followed in January, 519, and his last recorded prophesying in December, 518.¹

These are the certain events of Zechariah's history. But in the well-attested prophecies he has left we discover, besides some obvious traits of character, certain problems of style and expression which suggest a personality of more than usual interest. Loyalty to the great voices of old, the temper which appeals to the experience, rather than to the dogmas, of the past, the gift of plain speech to his own times, an anxiety about his reception as a prophet,² combined with the absence of ambition to be original or anything but the clear voice of the lessons of the past and of the conscience of to-day—these characterise Zechariah's orations to the people. But how to reconcile them with the strained art and obscure truths of the Visions—it is this which invests his personality with interest.

¹ More than this we do not know of Zechariah. Jewish and Christian traditions of him are as unfounded as those of other prophets. According to the Jews he was, of course, a member of the mythical Great Synagogue. See on Haggai, pp. 229 f. As with the prophets already treated, the Christian traditions are in (Pseud-)Epiphanius, *De Vitis Prophetarum*, Dorotheus, and Hesychius, as quoted, pp. 79 f. Zechariah, after predicting in Babylon the birth of Zerubbabel, and to Cyrus his victory over Croesus and his treatment of the Jews, came in old age to Jerusalem, prophesied, died and was buried near Beit-Jibrin—another instance of the relegation by Christian tradition of the birth and burial places of many prophets to that neighbourhood. Compare Beit-Zakharya, 12 m. from Beit-Jibrin. Hesychius says he was born in Gilead. Dorotheus confuses him, as Jews did, with Zechariah of Isa. viii. 1. See p. 260. Zechariah was not the Zechariah our Lord describes as slain between Temple and Altar (Matt. xxiii. 35; Luke xi. 51), called in the former passage alone son of Barachiah. In *Evang. Nazar.* Jerome read *the son of Yehoyada*. Both readings may be insertions. According to 2 Chron. xxiv. 21, in the reign of Joash, Zechariah, son of Yehoyada the priest, was stoned in the court of the Temple, and according to Josephus (IV. *Wars*, v. 4), in the year 68 A.D. Zechariah son of Baruch was assassinated in the Temple by two zealots. The latter murder may have led to the insertion of Barachiah in Matt. xxiii. 35 (Marti, 58 f.).

² ii. 8, 11; iv. 9; vi. 15.

We have seen that the obscurity and redundancy of the Visions cannot all have been due to himself. Later hands exaggerated the repetitions and ravelled the processes of the original. But these gradual blemishes did not grow from nothing: the original style must have been sufficiently involved to provoke interpolations, and certainly contained the weird and shifting apparitions which we find hard to make clear. The problem remains—how one, with gift of speech so straight and clear, came to torture and tangle his style; how one who presented with plainness the main issues of his people's history found it laid upon him to invent, for the further expression of these, symbols so laboured and intricate.

We begin with the oracle, which opens his book and illustrates those simple characteristics of the man that contrast with the temper of his Visions.

i. 1-6. *In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, the Word of Yahweh came to the prophet Zechariah, son of Berekhyah, son of Iddo,¹ saying: Yahweh was very wroth² with your fathers. And thou shalt say unto them: Thus saith Yahweh of Hosts: Turn ye to Me—Rede of Yahweh of Hosts—that I may turn to you, saith Yahweh of Hosts! Be not like your fathers, to whom the former prophets preached, saying: Thus saith Yahweh of Hosts, Turn now from your evil ways and from³ your evil deeds, but they hearkened not, and paid no attention to Me—Rede of Yahweh. Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live for ever? But⁴ My words and My statutes, with which I charged My servants the prophets, did they not overtake your fathers? till these turned and said, As Yahweh of Hosts*

¹ LXX, 'Αδδω. See above, p. 259.

² Heb. *angered with anger*; Gr. *with great anger*.

³ As in LXX.

⁴ LXX has misunderstood and expanded this verse.

purposed to do to us, according to our ways and according to our doings, so hath He dealt with us.

It is a sign of the new age we have reached, that its prophet appeals to the older prophets as solemnly as they did to Moses. The history which led to the Exile has become to Israel as classic and sacred as her days of deliverance from Egypt and of conquest in Canaan. But more significant is what Zechariah seeks from that past; this we must discover, if we would appreciate his rank as a prophet.

The development of religion may be said to consist of a struggle between two tempers, both of which appeal to the past, but from opposite motives. The one proves its devotion to the older prophets by adopting the formulas of their doctrine, counts these sacred to the letter, and would enforce them in detail upon the minds and circumstances of the new generation. It conceives that truth has been promulgated once for all in forms as enduring as the principles they contain. It fences ancient rites, cherishes old custom and institutions, and when these are questioned becomes alarmed and even savage. The other temper is no whit behind this in its devotion to the past, but seeks the ancient prophets not so much for what they have said as for what they have been, not for what they enforced but for what they encountered, suffered and confessed. It asks not for dogmas but for experience and testimony. He who can thus read the past and interpret it to his own day—he is the prophet. In his reading he finds nothing so clear, so tragic, so convincing as the working of the Word of God. He beholds how this came to men, haunted them and was entreated by them. He sees that it was their great opportunity, which being rejected became their judgement. He finds justice vindicated, wrong punished, and God's neglected

commonplaces achieving their triumph. He reads how men came to see this, and to confess their guilt. He is haunted by the remorse of generations who know how they might have obeyed the Divine call, but wilfully did not. And though they have perished, and the prophets have died and their formulas are no more applicable, the victorious Word still lives and cries to men with the terrible emphasis of their fathers' experience. All this is the vision of the true prophet, and was the vision of Zechariah.

His generation was one whose chief temptation was to adopt towards the past the other attitude we have described. In their feebleness what could the poor remnant of Israel do but cling servilely to the former greatness? The vindication of the Exile had stamped the Divine authority of the earlier prophets. The habits, which life in Babylon had perfected, of arranging and codifying the literature of the past, and of employing it, in place of altar and ritual, in the stated service of God, had canonised Scripture and provoked men to the worship of its letter. Had the real prophet not again been raised, these habits might have too early produced the belief that the Word of God was exhausted, and fastened upon the feeble life of Israel that mass of stiff and stark dogmas, the literal application of which Christ afterwards found crushing the liberty of religion. Zechariah prevented this—for a time. He was mighty in the Scriptures of the past: no man in Israel makes larger use of them. But he employs them as witnesses, not as dogmas; he finds in them not authority, but experience.¹ He reads their testimony to the ever-living presence of God's Word with men. And seeing that, though the old forms and

¹ Zechariah appeals to the Torah of the prophets, and mentions *no* Torah of the priests. Cf. Smend, *A.T. Rel. Gesch.*, pp. 176 f.

figures perished with the hearts which shaped them, the Word itself in its bare truth has vindicated its life by fulfilment in history, he knows that it lives still, and hurls it upon his people, not in the forms published by this or that prophet of long ago, but in its essence and direct from God, as His Word for to-day and now. *The fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live for ever? But My words and My statutes, with which I charged My servants the prophets, have they not overtaken your fathers? Thus saith Yahweh of Hosts, Be ye not like your fathers, but turn ye to Me that I may turn to you.*

The argument of this oracle might naturally have been narrowed into a credential for the prophet himself as sent from God. About his reception as God's messenger Zechariah shows a repeated anxiety. Four times he concludes a prediction with the words, *Ye shall know that Yahweh hath sent me*,¹ as if after his first utterances he had encountered that suspicion and unbelief which a prophet never failed to suffer from his contemporaries. But in this oracle there is no trace of such anxiety. It is pervaded only with the desire to prove the ancient Word of God as still alive, and to drive it home in its own sheer force. Like the greatest of his order, Zechariah appears with the call to repent: *Turn ye to Me—Rede of Yahweh of Hosts—that I may turn to you.* This is the pivot on which history has turned, the one condition on which God has been able to help men. Wherever it is read as the conclusion of all the past, wherever proclaimed as the conscience of the present, there the prophet is found and the Word of God is spoken.

The same possession by the ethical spirit appears in Zechariah's orations to the people after the anxieties

¹ Page 261, n. 2.

of building are over and the completion of the Temple is in sight. In these he reaffirms that the essence of God's Word by the older prophets has been moral—to judge true judgement, to practise mercy, to defend the widow and orphan, the stranger and poor, and to think no evil of one another. For the sad fasts of the Exile Zechariah enjoins gladness, with the duty of truth and the hope of peace. Again and again he enforces sincerity and the love without dissimulation. His ideals for Jerusalem are very high, including the conversion of the nations to her God. But warlike ambitions have vanished from them, and his pictures of her future condition are homely and practical. Jerusalem shall be no more a fortress, but spread village-wise without walls.¹ Full families, unlike the present colony with its few children and its men worn out in middle life by harassing warfare with enemies and sullen nature; streets rife with children playing and old folk sitting in the sun; the return of exiles; happy harvests and springtimes of peace, solid gain of labour for every man, with no raiding neighbours to harass, nor the mutual envies of peasants in their struggle with famine.

It is a simple, hearty, practical man whom such prophesying reveals, the spirit of him bent on justice and love, and yearning for the unharassed labour of the field and happy homes. No prophet has more beautiful sympathies, a more direct word of righteousness, or a braver heart. *Fast not, but love truth and peace. Truth and wholesome justice set ye up in your gates. Be not afraid; strengthen your hands! Old men and women shall yet sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with staff in hand for the fulness of their years; the city's streets shall be rife with boys and girls at play.*

¹ This picture is given in one of the Visions: the Third.

CHAPTER XXI

THE VISIONS OF ZECHARIAH

ZECHARIAH I. 7-VI

THE Visions of Zechariah do not lack those large and simple views of religion which we have seen to be the charm of his other prophecies. Indeed it is among the Visions that we find the most spiritual of his utterances :¹ *Not by might, and not by force, but by My Spirit, saith Yahweh of Hosts.* The Visions express the need of Divine forgiveness, emphasise the reality of sin, as deeper than the civic crimes in which it is manifested, and declare God's power to banish it from His people. The Visions also contain the prospect of Jerusalem as the City of Peace, her only wall the Lord.² The overthrow of the empires is predicted by His own hand, and from all the Visions are absent both the turmoil and the glory of war.

We must be struck by the absence of another element, which is a cause of complexity in the writings of some prophets—the polemic against idolatry. Zechariah nowhere mentions idols. We have seen what proof this silence bears for the fact that the community to which he spoke was not that half-heathen remnant of

¹ iv. 6. Unless this be an earlier prophecy. See p. 292.

² ii. 8, 19 Heb., 4, 5 LXX and Eng.

Israel which had remained in the land, but was composed of worshippers of Yahweh who at His word had returned from Babylon.¹ Here we have only to do with the bearing of the fact on Zechariah's style. That confusion of the heathen pantheon and its rites, which forms so much of our difficulty in interpreting some prophecies of Ezekiel and the closing chapters of the Book of Isaiah, is not to blame for any of the complexity in Zechariah's Visions.

Nor can we attribute the latter to the fact that the Visions are dreams, and bound to be more involved and obscure than the words of Yahweh which came to Zechariah in the open daylight of his people's public life. In chs. i. 7-vi we have not the narrative of actual dreams, but conscious and artistic allegories—the translation into a carefully constructed symbolism of the truths with which the prophet was entrusted by his God. Yet this but increases our problem—why a man with gifts of direct speech and clear views of his people's character and history should choose to express the latter by imagery so artificial and involved? In his orations Zechariah is like the prophets whom we have known before the Exile, thoroughly ethical and intent upon the public conscience of his time. He appreciates what they were, feels himself standing in their succession, and is endowed both with their spirit and their style. But none of them constructs the elaborate allegories which he does, or insists upon the religious symbolism which he enforces as indispensable to the standing of Israel with God. Not only are their visions few and simple, but they look down upon the visionary temper as a rude stage of prophecy inferior to their own, in which the Word of God is

¹ See p. 213, where this is stated as against Koster's theory that there was no Return from Babylon in the reign of Cyrus.

received by personal communion with Himself, and conveyed to His people by straight and plain words. Some of the earlier prophets even condemn priesthood and ritual ; none of them regards these as indispensable to Israel's right relations with God ; and none employs those superhuman mediators of the truth, by whom Zechariah is instructed in his Visions.

I. THE INFLUENCES WHICH MOULDED THE VISIONS

The explanation of this change that has come over prophecy must be sought for in habits which the people formed in exile. During the Exile several causes conspired to develop among Hebrew writers the tempers both of symbolism and apocalypse. The chief of these was their separation from the realities of civic life, with the opportunity their political leisure afforded of brooding and dreaming. Facts and Divine promises, which had previously to be dealt with by the conscience of the moment, were left to be worked out by the imagination. The exiles were not responsible citizens or statesmen, but dreamers, inspired by mighty hopes for the future, and not fettered by the practical necessities of a definite historical situation upon which these hopes had to be immediately realised. They had a far-off horizon to build on, and they occupied the whole breadth of it. They had a long time to build, and they elaborated the details of their architecture. Consequently their construction of the future of Israel, and their description of the processes by which it was to be reached, became colossal, ornate, lavishly symbolic. Nor could the exiles fail to receive stimulus for this from the rich imagery of Babylonian art by which they were surrounded.

Under these influences there were three strong developments in Israel. One was that development of

Apocalypse the beginnings of which we traced in Zephaniah—the representation of God's providence of the world and of His people, not by the ordinary political and military processes of history, but by convulsions and catastrophes, both in nature and in politics, in which God Himself appeared, either alone in sudden glory or by the mediation of heavenly armies. The second—and it was but a part of the first—was the development of a belief in Angels: superhuman beings who had not only a part to play in the apocalyptic wars and revolutions, but, in the growing sense, which characterises the period, of God's distance and awfulness, were believed to act as his agents in the communication of His Word to men. And, thirdly, there was the development of the Ritual. To some minds this may appear the strangest of the effects of the Exile. The fall of the Temple, its hierarchy and sacrifices, might be supposed to enforce more spiritual conceptions of God and of His communion with His people. And no doubt it did. The impossibility of the legal sacrifices in exile opened the mind of Israel to the belief that God was satisfied with the sacrifices of the broken heart, and drew near, without mediation, to all who were humble and pure of heart. But no one in Israel understood that these sacrifices were for ever abolished. Their interruption was regarded as merely temporary even by the most spiritual of Jewish writings. The Fifty-First Psalm, which declares that *the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit ; a broken and a contrite heart, O Lord, Thou wilt not despise*, follows this declaration by the assurance that *when God builds again the walls of Jerusalem, He will once more take delight in the legal sacrifices : burnt offering and whole burnt offering, the oblation of bullocks upon Thine altar.*¹ For

¹ Vv. 17 and 19.

men of such views the ruin of the Temple was not its abolition, with the dispensation which it represented, but the occasion for its reconstruction upon wider lines and a more detailed system, for the planning of which the nation's exile afforded the leisure and the carefulness of art described above. The ancient liturgy, too, was insufficient for the stronger convictions of guilt and need of purgation, which sore punishment had impressed upon the people. Then, scattered among the heathen as they were, they learned to require stricter laws and more drastic ceremonies to restore and preserve their holiness. Their ritual, therefore, had to be expanded and detailed to a degree beyond what we find in Israel's earlier systems of worship. With the fall of the monarchy and the absence of civic life the importance of the priesthood was enhanced ; and the growing sense of God's aloofness from the world, already alluded to, made the more indispensable human, as well as superhuman, mediators between Himself and His people. Consider these things and it will be clear why prophecy, which with Amos had begun a war against ritual, and with Jeremiah achieved a religion independent of priesthood and Temple, should reappear after the Exile, insistent upon the building of the Temple, enforcing the need of priesthood and sacrifice, and while it proclaimed the Messianic King and the High Priest as the great feeders of the national life and worship, should find no place beside them for the Prophet himself.¹

The force of these developments of Apocalypse, Angelology and Ritual appears both in Ezekiel and in the exilic codification of the ritual that forms so large a part of the Pentateuch. Ezekiel carries Apocalypse

¹ See Zechariah's Fifth Vision.

far beyond the beginnings started by Zephaniah. He introduces, though not under the name of angels, superhuman mediators between himself and God. The Priestly Code does not mention angels, and has no Apocalypse ; but like Ezekiel it develops, to an extraordinary degree, the ritual of Israel. Both its author and Ezekiel base on the older forms, but build as men who are not confined by the lines of an existing system. The changes they make, the innovations they introduce, are too numerous to mention here. To illustrate their influence upon Zechariah, it is enough to emphasise the place they give in the ritual to the processes of propitiation and cleansing from sin, and the increased authority with which they invest the priesthood. In Ezekiel Israel has still a Prince, though he is not called King. He arranges the cultus,¹ and sacrifices are offered for him and the people,² but the priests teach and judge the people.³ In the Priestly Code⁴ the priesthood is more rigorously fenced than by Ezekiel from the laity, and more regularly graded. At its head appears a High Priest (as he does not in Ezekiel), and by his side the civil rulers are portrayed in lesser dignity and power. Sacrifices are made, no longer as with Ezekiel for Prince and People, but for Aaron and the Congregation ; and throughout the narrative of ancient history, into the form of which this Code projects its legislation, the High Priest stands above the Captain of the host, even when the latter is Joshua himself. God's enemies are defeated not so much by the wisdom and valour of the secular powers, as by the miracles of Yahweh, mediated through the priesthood. Ezekiel and the Priestly Code both elaborate the

¹ xliv. 1 ff.² xlv. 22.³ xliv. 23, 24.⁴ Its origin was the Exile, whether its date be before or after the First Return under Cyrus in 537 B.C.

sacrifices of atonement and sanctification beyond the earlier uses.

2. GENERAL FEATURES OF THE VISIONS

It was beneath these influences that Zechariah grew up, and to them we may trace, not only numerous details of his Visions, but the whole of their involved symbolism. He was himself a priest and the son of a priest, born and bred in the order to which we owe the codification of the ritual, and the development of those ideas of guilt and uncleanness that led to its expansion and specialisation. The Visions in which he deals with these are the Third to the Seventh. As with Haggai there is a High Priest, in advance upon Ezekiel and in agreement with the Priestly Code. As in the latter the High Priest represents the people, and carries their guilt before God.¹ He and his colleagues are pledges and portents of the coming Messiah. But the civil power is not yet diminished before the sacerdotal, as in the Priestly Code. We shall find indeed that a remarkable attempt has been made to alter the original text of a prophecy appended to the Visions,² in order to divert to the High Priest the coronation and Messianic rank there described. But any who read the passage carefully can see that the crown (a single crown, as the verb which it governs proves³) which Zechariah was ordered to make was designed for Another than the Priest, that the Priest was but to stand at this Other's right hand, and that there was to be concord between the two. This Other can only have been the Messianic Prince, Zerubbabel, as already proclaimed by Haggai.⁴ The altered text is due to a

¹ Fourth Vision, ch. iii.

² See ver. 11.

³ vi. 9-15.

⁴ ii. 20-23.

later period, when the High Priest became the civil as well as the religious head of the community. To Zechariah he was still only the right hand of the monarch in government; but the religious life of the people was already gathered up and concentrated in him. It is the priests, too, who by their perpetual service and holy life bring on the Messianic era.¹ Men come to the Temple to propitiate Yahweh for which Zechariah uses the anthropomorphic expression *to make smooth* or *placid His face*.² No more than this is made of the sacrificial system, which was not in full course when the Visions were announced. But the symbolism of the Fourth Vision is drawn from the furniture of the Temple. It is interesting that the great candelabrum seen by the prophet should be like, not the ten lights of the old Temple of Solomon, but the seven-branched candlestick of the Priestly Code. In the Sixth and Seventh Visions, the strong convictions of guilt and uncleanness, which were engendered in Israel by the Exile, are not removed by the sacrificial means enforced in the Priestly Code, but by symbolic processes in the style of the visions of Ezekiel.

The Visions in which Zechariah treats of the outer history of the world are the first two and the last, and in these we notice the influence of the Apocalypse developed during the Exile. In Zechariah's day Israel had no stage for their history save the site of Jerusalem and its immediate neighbourhood. So long as he keeps to this Zechariah is as practical and matter-of-fact as any of the prophets, but when he has to go beyond it to describe the overthrow of the heathen, he is unable

¹ iii. 8.

² חִלָּה אֶם-פָּנֵי יְהוָה. The verb (Piel) originally means *to make soft* or *flaccid*, and so *to soften* or *weaken by flattery*. 1 Sam. xiii. 12; 1 Kings xiii. 6, etc.

to project that, as Amos or Isaiah did, in terms of historic battle, and has to call in the apocalyptic. A people such as that poor colony of exiles, with no issue upon history, is forced to take refuge in Apocalypse, and carries with it even those of its prophets whose conscience, like Zechariah's, is most strongly bent upon the practical present. Consequently these three historical Visions are the most vague of the eight. They reveal the whole earth under the care of Yahweh and the patrol of His angels. They definitely predict the overthrow of the heathen empires. But, unlike Amos or Isaiah, the prophet does not see by what political movements this is to be effected. The world *is* still *at rest and quiet*.¹ The time is hidden in the Divine counsels ; the means, though clearly symbolised in *four smiths* who come forward to smite the horns of the heathen,² and in a chariot which carries God's wrath to the North,³ are obscure. The prophet appears to have intended, not any definite individuals or political movements of the immediate future, but God's own supernatural forces. In other words, the Smiths and Chariots are not an allegory of history, but powers apocalyptic. The forms of the symbols were derived by Zechariah from different sources. Perhaps that of the *smiths* who destroy the horns in the Second Vision was suggested by *the smiths of destruction* threatened upon Ammon by Ezekiel.⁴ In the horsemen of the First Vision and the chariots of the Eighth, Ewald sees reflected the couriers and posts which Darius organised ; they are more probably, as we shall see, a reflection of the military bands and patrols of the

¹ First Vision, ch. i. 11.

² Second Vision, ii. 1-4 Heb., i. 18-21 LXX and Eng.

³ Eighth Vision, ch. vi. 1-8.

⁴ **xxi.** 36 Heb., 31 Eng. : *skilful to destroy*.

Persians. But from whatever quarter Zechariah derived the aspect of these Divine messengers, he found precedents for them in the native beliefs of Israel. They are angels, incarnate as Hebrew angels always were, and in fashion like men. But this brings up the whole subject of the angels, whom he also sees employed as the mediators of God's Word to him ; and that is large enough to be left to a chapter by itself.¹

We have now before us all the influences which led Zechariah to the main form and chief features of his Visions.

3. EXPOSITION OF THE SEVERAL VISIONS

For all the Visions there is one date, *on the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, the month Shēbat, in the second year of Darius*, that is January or February, 519 ; and one Divine impulse, *the Word of Yahweh came to the prophet Zekharyah, son of Berekhyahu, son of Iddo, as follows (i. 7).*

THE FIRST VISION : THE ANGEL-HORSEMEN (i. 8-17)

The seventy years which Jeremiah fixed for the duration of the Babylonian servitude were drawing to a close. Four months had elapsed since Haggai promised that in a little while God would shake all nations.² But the world was not shaken : there was no political movement which promised to restore her glory to Jerusalem. A natural disappointment must have resulted among the Jews. In this situation the Word came to Zechariah, and both situation and Word he expressed by his First Vision.

It was one of the myrtle-strewn glens about Jeru-

¹ See next Chapter.

² Jer. xxv. 12 ; Hag. ii. 7.

saalem :¹ Zechariah calls it *the* Glen or Valley-Bottom, either because it was known to the Jews, or because he was wont to frequent it for prayer. He discovers in it what seems to be a rendezvous of Persian cavalry-scouts,² the leader of the troop in front, the rest behind, having come in with their reports. Soon, however, he is aware that they are angels, and with that quick, dissolving change both of function and figure which marks angelic apparitions,³ they explain their mission. Now it is an angel-interpreter at his side who speaks, and now the angel on the front horse. They are scouts of God come in from their survey of the whole earth. The world lies quiet. Whereupon *the angel of Yahweh* asks Him how long His anger must rest on Jerusalem and nothing be done to restore her ; and the prophet hears a comforting answer. The nations have done more evil to Israel than God empowered them to do. Their aggravations have changed His wrath against her to pity, and He is come back to her. She shall be rebuilt and overflow with prosperity.

The only perplexity in all this is the angels' report that the whole earth lies quiet. How this could have been in 519 is difficult to understand. The revolts against Darius were then active, the result uncertain, and he took at least three more years to put them all down. They were confined, it is true, to the east and north-east of the empire, but some threatened Babylon, and we can hardly ascribe the report of the angels to such a limitation of the Jews' horizon at this time as shut out Mesopotamia or the lands to the north. There

¹ Myrtles, once common in the Holy Land, are still found (Hasselquist, *Travels*, Tristram) in the glens about Jerusalem and elsewhere. They do not appear to have symbolic value in the Vision.

² For a less probable explanation see above, p. 275.

³ See pp. 303, 305.

remain two alternatives. Either these far-away revolts made only more impressive the stagnancy of the tribes of the rest of the empire, and the helplessness of the Jews and their Syrian neighbours was convincingly shown by their inability to take advantage even of the straits to which Darius was reduced ; or else in that month of vision Darius had quelled one of the rebellions against him, and for the moment there was quiet in the world.

1. 8-17. *By night I had a vision, and behold a man [riding a brown horse,¹] standing among the myrtles in the Glen ;² and behind him horses brown, bay³ and white. And I said, What are these, my lord ? And the Angel who talked with me said, I will show thee what these are. And the man standing among the myrtles answered and said, These are they whom Yahweh hath sent to go to and fro through the earth. And they answered the angel of Yahweh who stood among the myrtles,⁴ and said, We have gone up and down through the earth, and behold the whole earth is at rest and quiet.⁵ Then the angel of Yahweh answered and said, Yahweh of Hosts, how long hast Thou no pity for Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, with which Thou hast been wroth these seventy years ? And Yahweh*

¹ Since Ewald most omit *riding a brown horse*, as ' marring the lucidity of the description, and added from a misconception by an early hand.' But we must not expect lucidity in a vision like this.

² מִצֵּלָה, Meṣullah, either *shadow* from צֶלַל, or for מִצְוֵלָה, a *deep*, or a proper name. LXX, which for הַנְּדָסִים, *myrtles*, reads הָרִים, *mountains*, renders אֲשֶׁר בַּמִּצְלָה by τῶν κατασκίων. Ewald, Hitzig מִצֵּלָה; Arab. mizhallah, *shadowing* or *tent*.

³ Heb. שֶׁרָקִים, only here. For this LXX gives καὶ ψαροὶ καὶ ποικίλοι, *and dappled and piebald*. Wright fully treats the question, pp. 531 ff. The Arab. cognate is sorrel, or yellowish-red.

⁴ *Who stood among the myrtles* omitted by Nowack, etc.

⁵ Isa. xiv. 7 ; Jer. xlvii. 7.

*answered the angel who talked with me*¹ *kind words and comforting. And the angel who talked with me said to me, Proclaim saying: Thus saith Yahweh of Hosts, I am zealous for Jerusalem and for Sion, with a great zeal. But with great wrath am I wroth against the arrogant nations; for I was but a little angry with Israel, but they aggravated the evil.*² *Therefore Yahweh saith thus, I am come back to Jerusalem with mercies, My house shall be built in her—Rede of Yahweh of Hosts—and a measuring line drawn over Jerusalem. Proclaim yet again, saying: Thus saith Yahweh of Hosts, My cities shall yet overflow with prosperity, and Yahweh again comfort Sion, and again choose Jerusalem.*

Two things are to be noted. No political movement is indicated as the means of Jerusalem's restoration: this is to be of God's free grace in returning to Jerusalem, which is the reward of the building of the Temple. And there is an explanation of the motive for God's new grace: in executing His sentence upon Israel, the heathen had exceeded their commission, and now themselves deserved punishment. The restoration of Jerusalem and resumption of the worship are not enough for the future of Israel. The heathen must be chastised. But Zechariah does not predict any overthrow of the world's power, either by earthly or by heavenly forces. This is in harmony with the insistence on peace which distinguishes him from other prophets.

THE SECOND VISION: THE FOUR HORNS AND THE FOUR SMITHS (ii. 1-4 Heb., i. 18-21 Eng.)

The Second Vision supplies what is lacking in the First, the destruction of the tyrants who have oppressed

¹ *Who talked with me* omitted by Nowack, etc.

² Heb. *helped for evil*, or *till it became a calamity*.

Israel. The prophet sees four horns, which, he is told by his interpreting angel, are the powers that have scattered Judah. The attempts to identify these with four heathen nations are ingenious but futile. 'Four horns were seen as representing the totality of Israel's enemies—her enemies from all quarters.'¹ To destroy these horns four smiths appear. Because in the Vision the horns are of iron, in Israel an old symbol of power, the first verb can hardly be, as in the Hebrew text, *to terrify*. The Greek reads *sharpen*; some verb meaning *to cut* or *chisel* stood in the original.²

i. 18-21. *And I lifted mine eyes and looked, and behold four horns. And I said to the Angel who spake with me, What are these? And he said to me, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem.*³ *And Yahweh showed me four smiths. And I said, What come these to do? And he spake, saying, These are the horns which scattered Judah, so that none raised his head;*⁴ *and these come to startle*⁵ *them, to strike down the horns of the nations, that lifted the horn against the land of Judah*⁶ *to scatter it.*

¹ Marcus Dods, *Hag., Zech. and Mal.*, p. 71. Orelli: 'In distinction from Daniel, Zechariah is fond of a simultaneous survey, not the presenting of a succession.'

² For the symbolism of iron horns see Mic. iv. 13, and cf. Orelli's note, that the destroyers must be smiths as in Isa. xlv. 12, *workmen of iron*, and not, as in LXX, *carpenters*.

³ Wellhausen, Nowack, etc., delete *Israel and Jerusalem*; the latter does not occur in Codd. A., Q., of Septuagint.

⁴ Wellhausen reads, after Mal. ii. 9, כפי אשר, *so that it lifted not its head*; but in that case we should not find ראשו, but ראשה.

⁵ החריד, but LXX read הוריד, and either that or some verb of cutting must be read.

⁶ LXX, *Yahweh*.

THE THIRD VISION : THE CITY OF PEACE
(ii. 5-9 Heb., ii. 1-5 Eng.)

Like the Second Vision, the Third follows from the First, another, but a still more significant, supplement. The First had promised the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and now the prophet beholds *a young man*—probably *a servant* or *apprentice*—who is attempting to define the limits of the new city. In the light of what this attempt encounters, there can be little doubt that the prophet means to symbolise by it the intention of building the walls upon the old lines, so as to make Jerusalem again the mountain fortress she had been. Some have thought that the young man goes forth only to see, or to show, the extent of the city in the approaching future. But if this was his motive, there would have been no reason in interrupting him with other orders. The point is, that he has narrow ideas of what the city should be, and is prepared to define it upon its old lines. For the interpreting angel who *comes forward*¹ is told by another angel to run and tell the young man that in the future Jerusalem shall be a large unwallled town, and this, not only because of the multitude of her population, for even then she might still have been fortified like Nineveh, but because the Lord Himself shall be her wall. And this is in conformity with the singular absence of war from Zechariah's Visions, both of the future deliverance of the Lord's people and of their future duties before Him. Zechariah not only develops none of the warlike elements of earlier Messianic prophecies, but tells us here of how God Himself prevented their repetition, and insists again

¹ The Hebrew, *comes forth*, is the technical term throughout the Visions for the entrance of the figures upon the stage.

and again only on those elements of ancient prediction which filled the future of Israel with peace.

ii. 1-5.¹ *And I lifted mine eyes and looked, and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand. So I said, Whither art thou going? And he said to me, To measure Jerusalem: to see what her breadth and what her length should be. But behold the Angel who talked with me stood still,² and another angel came forward to meet him. And he said to him, Run, speak to yonder young man thus: Like open villages shall Jerusalem remain, because of the multitude of men and cattle in her midst. And Myself will be to her—Rede of Yahweh—a wall of fire round about, and for glory will I be in her midst.*

In this Vision Zechariah gives a lesson in the interpretation of prophecy. His contemporaries believed God's promise to rebuild Jerusalem, but defined its limits by those of an older, narrower day. Such literal fulfilment of His Word God prevented by that ministry of angels which Zechariah beheld. He would not be bound by those forms which His Word had assumed in consonance to the needs of ruder generations. The ideal of many of the returned exiles must have been that frowning citadel, those *everlasting gates*³ which were celebrated in Psalms, and from which the hosts of Sennacherib had been swept back as the sea is swept from the fixed line of Canaan's coast.⁴ What had been enough for David and Isaiah was enough for them, especially as prophets had foretold a Messianic Jerusalem that should be a counterpart of the historical. But God breaks the letter of His Word to give its spirit a more glorious fulfilment. Jerusalem shall not *be builded as a city that is compact together*,⁵ but open

¹ Heb. ii. 5-9.

² So LXX. ἵστηκε, *stood up*. So Nowack, etc., Heb. *came forward*

³ Psalm xxiv.

⁴ Isa. xvii. 12-14.

⁵ Psalm cxxii. 3.

and spread village-wise upon her mountains, with God Himself her only wall.

The interest of this Vision is therefore not only historical. For ourselves it has an abiding value. It is a lesson in the method of applying prophecy to the future. How much it is needed we must feel as we remember the readiness of men to construct the Church of God upon the lines His hand drew for their fathers, and to raise again the bulwarks behind which they sufficiently sheltered His shrine. Whether these ancient and sacred defences be dogmas or institutions, we have no right, God tells us, to cramp behind them His powers for the future. And the great men whom He raises to remind us of this, and to prevent by their ministry the timid measurements of the zealous but servile spirits who would confine everything to the letter of ancient Scripture—are they any less His angels to us than those ministering spirits whom Zechariah beheld preventing the narrow measures of the poor apprentice of his dream?

To the Third Vision is appended the only lyric which breaks the prose of the Visions (ii. 6–13 LXX and Eng., ii. 10–17 Heb.). We have seen that it may be of earlier date. Israel is addressed as still scattered to the four winds, and inhabiting Babylon, which may of course refer only to the many Jews still there. The Lord is only about to return to Şion, while in Zechariah's visions He has already returned. There is nothing about the Temple; the *holy dwelling* from which God has roused Himself is Heaven.

Whether by Zechariah or not the piece was probably inserted by himself. There are interpolations in it; and whether it is right to read it as verse throughout is uncertain.¹

¹ See above, p. 255.

12. *Yahweh will make His heritage Judah,
His portion shall be on the holy soil,
And again shall He choose Jerusalem.*
13. *Silence, all flesh before Yahweh,¹
He hath roused Him out of His holy dwelling.²*

THE FOURTH VISION : THE HIGH PRIEST AND THE SATAN (Chap. iii)

The next Visions deal with the moral condition of Israel and their standing before God. The Fourth is a judgement scene. The Angel of Yahweh—not to be distinguished from Yahweh Himself—stands for judgement, and there appear before Him Joshua the High Priest and the Satan or Adversary who has come to accuse him. Now those who are accused by the Satan—see next chapter of this volume upon the Angels of the Visions—are, according to Jewish belief, those who have been overtaken by misfortune. The people who stand at God's bar in the person of their High Priest still suffer from the adversity in which Haggai found them, and which disheartened them after the Temple had begun. The evil seasons and poor harvests tormented their hearts with the thought that the Satan slandered them in the court of God. But Zechariah comforts them with the vision of the Satan rebuked. Israel has indeed been sorely beset by calamity, a brand much burned, but now of God's grace plucked from the fire. The Satan's rôle is closed, and he disappears.³ Yet something remains : Israel is rescued, but not sanctified. The nation's troubles are over :

¹ Cf. Zeph. i. 7, Hab. ii. 20. ' Among the Arabs, after the slaughter of the victim, the participants stood some time silent about the altar. That was the moment the Deity approached to take his share in the sacrifice ' (Smend, *A.T. Rel. Gesch.*, 124).

² Not the Temple but Heaven.

³ See below, p. 309.

their uncleanness has still to be removed. Zechariah sees the High Priest clothed in filthy garments, while he stands before the Angel of Judgement. The Angel orders his servants, *that stand before him*,¹ to give him clean festal robes. And the prophet, breaking out in sympathy with what he sees, for the first time takes part in the Visions. *Then I said, Let them also put a clean turban on his head*—the turban being in Ezekiel the headdress of the Prince of Israel, and in the Priestly Code of the High Priest.² This done, the national effect of his cleansing is explained to the High Priest. If he remains loyal to the law of Yahweh, he, the representative of Israel, shall have right of entry to God's presence among the angels who stand there. But more, he and his colleagues the priests are a portent of the coming of the Messiah—the *Servant of Yahweh*, the *Branch*, as he has been called by many prophets.³ A stone has been set before Joshua, with seven eyes upon it. God will engrave it, and on the same day take away the guilt of the land. Then shall be the peace on which Zechariah loves to dwell.

iii. *And he showed me Yehoshua, the High Priest, standing before the Angel of Yahweh, and the Satan* ⁴ *standing at his right hand to accuse him.*⁵ *And Yahweh* ⁶ *said to the Satan : Yahweh rebuke thee, O Satan ! Yahweh*

¹ In this Vision the verb *to stand before* is used in two technical senses : (a) of the appearance of plaintiff and defendant before their judge (vv. 1, 3) ; (b) of servants before their masters (vv. 4, 7).

² See below, p. 287, n. 4.

³ Isa. iv. 2, xi. 1 ; Jer. xxiii. 5, xxxiii. 15 ; Isa. liii. 2. Stade (*Gesch. des Volkes Isr.*, II, 125) and Marti (*Der Proph. Sach.*, 85 n.) suspect *I will bring in My Servant the Branch* as an interpolation, entangling the construction and finding in this section no justification.

⁴ Or *Adversary*, p. 309.

⁵ *To Satan him : slander, accuse, him.*

⁶ That is *the Angel of Yahweh*, which Wellhausen, Nowack, etc., read ; but see below, pp. 305 f.

who makes choice of Jerusalem rebuke thee! Is not this a brand saved from the fire? But Yehoshua was clothed in foul garments while he stood before the Angel. And he—the Angel—answered and said to those who stood in his presence, Take the foul garments from off him (and he said to him, See, I have made thy guilt to pass from thee),¹ and clothe him² in fresh clothing. And I said,³ Let them put a clean turban⁴ on his head. And they put the clean turban on his head, and clothed him with garments, the Angel of Yahweh standing by.⁵ And the Angel of Yahweh certified to Yehoshua, saying: Thus saith Yahweh of Hosts, If in My ways thou walkest, and if My charges thou keepest, then thou too shalt judge My house, and guard My courts, and I will give to thee entry⁶ among these who stand before Me. Harken now,

¹ This clause interrupts the Angel's speech to the servants. Wellhausen Nowack, etc. omit it. העביר: cf. 2 Sam. xii. 13; Job vii, 21.

² So LXX. Heb. has a degraded form, *clothe thyself*, which has been made to suit the intrusion of the previous clause, and is an argument against the authenticity of the latter.

³ LXX omits *I said* and reads *Let them put* as another imperative, *Do ye put*, following the two of the previous verse. Wellhausen adopts this (reading שימו for ישמו). Though it is difficult to see how אמר dropped from the text if once there, it is equally so to understand why if not original it was inserted. The passage has been tampered with. If we accept the Massoretic text, we have a natural interference by the dreamer; and he properly speaks in the indirect, imperative, *Let them put*.

⁴ צָנִיף, headdress of rich women (Isa. iii. 23) and eminent men (Job xxix. 14), means something wound round the head (cf. צָנִיף, to form like a ball, Isa. xxii. 18, and חָבַשׁ, to wind, to put on the headdress, Ezek. xvi. 10, etc.). Hence *turban* seems the proper rendering. Another form from the same root, מִצְנֶפֶת, is the headdress of the Prince of Israel (Ezek. xxi. 31); and, in the Priestly Code of the Pentateuch, of the high priest (Exod. xxviii. 37, etc.).

⁵ Wellhausen takes the last words of 5 with 6, and reads עָמַד, *And the Angel of Yahweh stood up or stepped forward*. But even if עָמַד be read, the order requires the pluperfect, which would come to the same as the original. And if Wellhausen be correct the words *Angel of Yahweh* in 6 are superfluous.

⁶ Read מִתְּחִלָּה (Smend, *A.T. Rel. Gesch.*, p. 324, n. 2).

O Yehoshua, High Priest, thou and thy fellows who sit before thee for they are men of omen, that, behold I bring My servant, Branch. For see the stone I have set before Yehoshua, one stone with seven eyes.¹ Behold I etch the engraving upon it—Rede of Yahweh—and I will wash off the guilt of that land in one day. In that day—Rede of Yahweh of Hosts—ye will invite one another in under vine and under fig-tree.

The theological significance of the Vision is as clear as its consequences in the subsequent theology and symbolism of Judaism. The uncleanness of Israel which infests their representative is not defined. Some ² hold that it includes the guilt of Israel's idolatry. But they have to go to Ezekiel for this, and we saw that Zechariah nowhere mentions or feels idols among his people. The Vision itself supplies a better explanation. Joshua's filthy garments are replaced by festal robes. He is warned to walk in the whole law of the Lord, ruling the Temple and guarding Yahweh's court. The uncleanness was the opposite of this. It was not ethical failure: covetousness, immorality. It was, as Haggai protested, neglect of the Temple and worship of Yahweh. If this be now removed, in all fidelity to the Law, the High Priest shall have access to God, and the Messiah will come. The High Priest shall not be the Messiah—this dogma is left to a later age to frame. But before God he will be as one of the Angels, and himself and his faithful priesthood omens of the Messiah. We need not linger on the significance of this for the place of the priesthood in later Judaism. Note how the High Priest is already the religious representative of his people: their uncleanness is his; when he is pardoned and cleansed, *the uncleanness of*

¹ Or *facets*.

² E.g., Marti, *Der Prophet Sacharja*, p. 83.

the land is purged. In such a High Priest Christian theology has seen the prototype of Christ.

The stone is difficult. Some have thought of it as the foundation-stone of the Temple, which had been a symbol of the Messiah and played so important a part in later Jewish symbolism.¹ Others prefer the top-stone of the Temple, mentioned in iv. 7,² and others an altar or substitute for the ark.³ Again, some take it as a jewel, either on the breastplate of the High Priest,⁴ or on the crown prepared for Zerubbabel.⁵ To all these there are objections. It is difficult to connect with the foundation-stone an engraving still to be made; neither the top-stone of the Temple, nor a jewel on the breastplate of the priest, or on the king's crown, could be said to be set *before* the High Priest. We must suppose that the stone is symbolic of the finished Temple.⁶ The Temple is the full expression of God's providence and care—His *seven eyes*. Upon it shall His will be engraved, and by its sacrifices the uncleanness of the land be taken away.

THE FIFTH VISION: THE TEMPLE CANDLESTICK AND THE TWO OLIVE-TREES (Chap. iv)

As the Fourth Vision unfolded the significance of the High Priest, so in the Fifth we find the joint glory of himself and Zerubbabel, the civil head of Israel. And to this is appended a Word for Zerubbabel. In our text this Word has become inserted in the middle of the Vision, vv. 6b-10a; in the translation following it

¹ Hitzig, Wright and many others. On the place of this stone in the legends of Judaism see Wright, pp. 75 f.

² Ewald, Marcus Dods.

³ Von Orelli, Volck.

⁴ Breidenkamp.

⁵ Wellhausen and Smend.

⁶ So Marti, p. 88.

is removed to the end of the Vision ; the reasons will be found in the notes.

The Vision is of the golden lamp which stood in the Temple. In the former Temple, light was supplied by ten candlesticks.¹ But the Levitical Code² ordained one seven-branched lamp, which appears to have stood in the Temple built while Zechariah was prophesying.³ The lamp Zechariah sees has also seven branches, but differs in other respects, especially in fantastic details only possible in dream and symbol. Its seven lights were fed by seven pipes from a reservoir of oil standing higher than themselves, and this was fed, either directly from two olive-trees which stood right and left of it, or, if ver. 12 be genuine, by two tubes which brought the oil from the trees. The seven lights are the seven eyes of Yahweh—if, as we ought, we run the second half of 10 on to the first half of 6. The pipes and reservoir are given no symbolic force ; but the olive-trees which feed them are called *the two sons of oil which stand before the Lord of all the earth*. These can only be the two anointed heads of the community—Zerubbabel, the civil, and Joshua, the religious, head. Theirs was the co-ordinate duty of sustaining the Temple, figured by the whole candelabrum, and ensuring the brightness of the sevenfold revelation. The Temple is nothing without the monarchy and the priesthood behind it ; and these stand in the presence of God. Therefore this Vision, which to the superficial eye might seem to be a glorification of the machinery of the Temple and its ritual, is rather to prove that the latter derive their power from the national institutions behind them, the two representatives of the people, who in their turn stand before God Himself. The

¹ 1 Kings vii. 49.

² 2 Exod. xxv. 31 ff.

³ 1 Macc. i. 21 ; iv. 49, 50. Josephus, XIV *Ant.*, iv. 4.

Temple so near completion will not of itself reveal God : let not the Jews put their trust in it, but in the life behind it. For ourselves the lesson is that which Christian theology has been slow to learn, that God's revelation under the old covenant shone not directly through the material framework, but was mediated by the national life, whose chief men stood and grew fruitful in His presence.

One thing is remarkable. The two sources of revelation are King and Priest. The Prophet is not mentioned. Nothing could more prove the sense in Israel that prophecy was exhausted.

The appointment of Zerubbabel to so responsible a position demanded a special promise of grace. So as Joshua had his promise in the Fourth Vision, Zerubbabel's is appended to the Fifth. It is one of the great sayings of the Old Testament : none is more spiritual and comforting. Zerubbabel shall complete the Temple, and those who scoffed at its beginnings in the day of small things shall frankly rejoice when they see him set the top-stone in its place. As the moral obstacles to the future were removed in the Fourth Vision by the vindication of Joshua and his cleansing, so the political obstacles, the hindrances described by the Book of Ezra, shall disappear. *Before Zerubbabel the great mountain shall become a plain.* And this, because he shall not work by his own strength, but the Spirit of the Lord shall do everything. Again we find that absence of expectation in human means, and that full trust in God's own action, which characterise the prophesying of Zechariah.

iv. 1-6a, 10b-14. *Then the Angel who talked with me came back and roused me like a man roused from his sleep. And he said to me, What seest thou ? And I*¹

¹ K and Versions ; Heb. *he*

said, I see, and behold a candlestick all of gold, and its bowl on the top of it, and its seven lamps on it, and seven ¹ pipes to the lamps on it, and two olive-trees over against it, one on the right of the bowl,² and one on its left. And I began ³ and said to the Angel who talked with me,⁴ What be these, my lord? And the Angel who talked with me answered and said, Knowest thou not what these be? And I answered, No, my lord! And he said in reply to me,⁵ These seven are the eyes of Yahweh, which sweep the whole earth. And I asked and said to him, What are these two olive-trees on the right and left of the candlestick? And again I asked and said to him, What are the two olive-branches which are beside the two golden tubes that pour forth the oil ⁶ from them? ⁷ And he said to me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord! And he said, These are the two sons of oil which stand before the Lord of all the earth.

iv. 6b-10a. This is Yahweh's Word to Zerubbabel, and it says: ⁸ Not by might, and not by force, but by My Spirit, saith Yahweh of Hosts. What art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel be level! And he ⁹ shall bring forth the top-stone with shoutings, Grace, grace to

¹ LXX. Heb. has *seven sevens* of pipes.

² Wellhausen reads *its right* and deletes *the bowl*.

³ וַאֲנִי. עָנָה is not only *to answer*, but to take part in a conversation, whether by starting or continuing it. LXX rightly ἐπηρώτησα.

⁴ Heb. *saying*.

⁵ In the Heb. text and ancient and modern versions, including English, there follow 6b-10a, the Word to Zerubbabel. They disturb the narrative of the Vision, and Wellhausen rightly transferred them to the end of it, where they come in as naturally as the word of hope to Joshua at the end of the preceding Vision. Remove them and ver. 10b follows naturally upon 6a.

⁶ Heb. *gold*. So LXX.

⁷ Wellhausen omits this second question (12) as needless intrusion. So Smend and Nowack as a doublet on 11.

⁸ Heb. *saying*.

⁹ LXX, *I*.

*it!*¹ And the Word of Yahweh came to me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel founded this house, and his hands shall complete it, and thou shalt know that Yahweh of Hosts hath sent me to you. For whoever despised the day of small things, shall rejoice when they see the plummet² in the hand of Zerubbabel.

THE SIXTH VISION: THE WINGED VOLUME (Chap. v. 1-4)

The religious and political obstacles being removed from Israel's future, Zechariah in the next two Visions beholds the land purged of wickedness. These Visions are simple, if after the ponderous fashion of Ezekiel.

The first is the Vision of the removal of the curse brought on the land by its civic criminals, especially thieves and perjurers—the forms which crime takes in a poor and rude community like that of the returned exiles. The prophet tells us he beheld a roll flying. He uses the ordinary Hebrew name for the rolls of skin or parchment on which writing was set. But its proportions—twenty cubits by ten—prove that it was opened out and not cylindrical but oblong.³ The volume is the record of the crime of the land, and Zechariah sees it flying from the land. But it is also the curse on this crime, and so again he beholds it entering every hitherto unpunished thief's and perjurer's house and destroying this. 'It appears that in ancient times curses were written on pieces of paper and sent down the wind into the houses'⁴ of those against whom they

¹ Or *Fair, fair is it!* Nowack.

² *The stone, the leaden.* Marti, *St. u. Kr.*, 1892, 213 n., takes *leaden* for a gloss, and reads *the stone, i.e., top-stone*; but the plummet is the last thing laid to test the level of the top-stone.

³ Cf. Isa. xxxiv. 4.

⁴ Smend, *A.T. Rel. Gesch.*, 312 n.

were directed. But the figure seems rather to be of birds of prey.

v. 1-4. *And I turned and lifted mine eyes and looked, and behold a volume¹ flying. And he said to me, What art thou seeing? And I said, I am seeing a volume flying, its length twenty cubits and its breadth ten. And he said unto me, This is the curse that is going out on the face of all the land. For every thief has long since been let off,² and every perjurer has long since been let off. I have sent it forth—Rede of Yahweh of Hosts—and it shall enter the thief's house, and the house of him that has sworn falsely by My name, and roost³ in the midst of his house and consume it, with its beams and its stones.⁴*

THE SEVENTH VISION: THE WOMAN IN THE BARREL (Chap. v. 5-11)

It is not enough that the curse fly through the land, destroying every criminal. The principle of sin, the

¹ מְנוּחָה, *roll* or *volume*. LXX, δρέπανον, *sickle*, מִקֵּל.

² A group of difficult words. נִקָּה is Ni. of a root of physical meaning, *to clear out of a place*, and is so used of a plundered town, Isa. iii. 26. But its usual meaning is *to be spoken free from guilt*, Ps. xix. 14, etc. Many take it here in the physical sense, Hitzig quoting καθαρίζω, Mark vii. 19. מְנוּחָה קְמוּחָה is then taken as a locative = *hence, i.e., from the land*; but some take it with *steal* (Hitzig), some with *cleared out* (Ewald, Orelli, etc.). קְמוּחָה is rendered *like it*, the flying roll (Ewald, Orelli), which cannot be, for while the roll flies over the land and into the houses, the sinner on this locative interpretation is to be cleared out of the land; or is rendered *in accordance with* the roll and its curse. But Wellhausen, Nowack, Marti, Moffatt, etc., read מְנוּחָה קְמוּחָה and take נִקָּה in its usual moral sense, and as a past tense, *Every thief has for long remained unpunished*, and so in the next clause. LXX, πᾶς ὁ κλέπτης ἐκ τούτου ἕως θανάτου ἐκδικηθήσεται.

³ Heb. *lodge, pass the night*: cf. Zeph. ii. 14 (above, p. 64).

⁴ Smend sees a continuation of Ezekiel's idea of the guilt of *man* overtaking him (iii. 20, xxxiv) Here God's curse does all.

power of temptation, must be covered and removed. This is the subject of the Seventh Vision.

The prophet sees an ephah, the largest vessel of Jews, of more than seven gallons, and round¹ like a barrel. Presently the leaden top is lifted, and the prophet sees a woman inside. This is Wickedness, feminine, for she figures temptation. She is thrust back into the barrel, the leaden lid is pushed down, and the whole carried off by two other female figures, winged like the far-flying stork, into the land of Shin'ar, 'which had the general significance of the counterpart of the Holy Land,'² and was the proper home of all that was evil.

v. 5-II. *And the Angel of Yahweh who spake with me came forward³ and said to me, Lift now thine eyes and see what this is that comes forth. And I said, What is it? And he said, This is a bushel coming forth. And he said, This is their transgression⁴ in all the land.⁵ And behold, the round leaden top was lifted, and behold⁶ one woman sitting inside the bushel. And he said, This is the Wickedness, and he thrust her back into the bushel, and thrust the leaden disc upon the mouth of it. And I lifted*

¹ This follows from the shape of the disc that fits into it. Seven gallons are seven-eighths of the English bushel: that in use in Canada and the United States is somewhat smaller.

² Ewald.

³ Upon the stage of vision.

⁴ For Heb. עֲוֹנָם, read עֲוֹנָם, *their guilt or transgression*, with LXX.

⁵ By inserting אִיפָה after מֶה in ver. 5, and deleting הַיִּצְאָה . . . וְיֵאמַר in 6, Wellhausen secures the concise text: *And see what this bushel is that comes forth. And I said, What is it? And he said, That is the evil of the people in the whole land.* But to reduce the redundancies of the Visions is to delete their most characteristic feature. Besides, Wellhausen's result gives no sense. The prophet would not be asked to see what a bushel is: the angel is there to tell him. So Wellhausen has to omit the מֶה of ver. 5, while telling us in his note to replace הַיִּצְאָה after it. His emendation is to be rejected. Nowack accepts it.

⁶ LXX. Heb. *this*

*mine eyes and looked, and behold two women came forth with the wind in their wings, for they had wings like storks' wings, and they raised up the bushel between earth and heaven. And I said to the angel that talked with me, Whither do they carry the bushel? And he said to me, To build it a house in the land of Shin'ar, that it may be fixed and brought to rest there on its own place.*⁵

We must not allow this curious imagery to hide its spiritual teaching. If Zechariah is weighted in these Visions by the ponderous fashion of Ezekiel, he has also that prophet's moral spirit. He is not content with the ritual atonement for sin, nor with the legal punishment of crime. The living power of sin must be banished from Israel; and this cannot be done by efforts of men, but by God's action, which is thorough and effectual. If the figures which illustrate this appear grotesque and heavy, let us remember how they would suit the imagination of the prophet's day. Let us lay to heart their eternally valid doctrine, that sin is not a formal curse, nor only expressed in social crimes, nor exhausted by the punishment of these, but, as a power of temptation to all men, it must be banished from the heart, and can be banished only by God.

THE EIGHTH VISION: THE CHARIOTS OF THE FOUR WINDS (Chap. vi. 1-8)

As the series of Visions opened with one of the universal providence of God, so they close with another of the same. The First Vision had postponed God's overthrow of the nations till His own time, and this the

⁵ In the last clause the verbal forms are obscure, if not corrupt. LXX, *καὶ ἔτοιμασαι καὶ θήσουσιν αὐτο ἐκεῖ* = *לְהַכִּין וְהַיָּהוּהָ שָׁם*; but see Ewald, *Syntax*, 131*d*, *own or proper place*.

Last Vision describes as begun, the religious and moral needs of Israel having been met by the Visions which come between, and every obstacle to God's action for the deliverance of His people removed.

The prophet sees four chariots, with horses of different colour in each, coming out from between two mountains of bronze. The horsemen of the First Vision were bringing reports: these chariots come forth with commissions from the Lord of all the earth. They are the four winds of heaven, servants of Him Who makes the winds His messengers. They are destined for different quarters of the world. The prophet has not been admitted to the Presence, and knows not what exactly they are commissioned to do; that is, Zechariah is ignorant of the actual processes by which the nations are to be overthrown and Israel glorified. But his Angel-interpreter tells him that the black horses go north, the white west, and the dappled south, while the horses of the fourth chariot, impatient because no direction is assigned them, are ordered to patrol through the earth. None are sent eastward.¹ This appears to mean that, in Zechariah's day, no power oppressed or threatened Israel from that direction; but in the north there was the centre of the Persian Empire, to the south Egypt, still a possible master of the world, and to the west the new forces of Europe, which in less than a generation were to prove a match for Persia. So the horses of the fourth chariot are given the charge to patrol the whole earth—unless in ver. 7 we should translate, not *earth*, but *land*, and understand a commission to patrol the land of Israel.

¹ Wellhausen suggests that in the direction assigned to the white horses, אַחֲרָדִים (ver. 6), which we have rendered *westward*, we might read אֶרֶץ הַקֶּדֶם, *land of the east*; and that from ver. 7 *the west* has probably fallen out after *they go forth*.

The centre of the world's power is in the north, and therefore the black horses, dispatched in that direction, are described as charged to bring God's spirit, that is His anger or His power, to bear on that quarter.

vi. 1-8. *And once more*¹ *I lifted mine eyes and looked, and behold four chariots coming forward from between two mountains, and the mountains were mountains of bronze. In the first chariot were brown horses, and in the second chariot black horses, and in the third chariot white horses, and in the fourth chariot dappled . . .*² *horses. Then I broke in and said to the Angel who talked with me, What are these, my lord? And the Angel answered and said to me, These be the four winds of heaven that come forth from presenting themselves before the Lord of all the earth.*³ *The black horses go forth to the land of the north, while the white go out west*⁴ (?), *and the dappled go to the land of the south. And the . . .*⁵ *go forth and strain*⁶ *to go, to march up and down on the earth. And he said, Go, march up and down on the earth; and they marched up and down on the earth. Then he cried upon me and spake to me, saying, See they that go forth to the land of the north have brought My spirit to bear*⁷ *on the land of the north.*

¹ Heb. *I turned again and.*

² Hebrew reads אַמְצִים, *strong*; LXX, ψαροί, *dappled*, and for the previous בְּרָדִים, *spotted or dappled*, it reads ποικίλοι, *piebald*. Perhaps we should read חֲמָצִים (cf. Isa. lxiii. 1), *dark red or sorrel*, with *grey spots*. So Ewald and Orelli. Wright keeps *strong*.

³ Wellhausen, supplying ל before אַרְבַּע, renders *These go forth to the four winds of heaven after they have presented themselves, etc.*

⁴ Heb. *behind them.*

⁵ אַמְצִים, the second epithet of the horses of the fourth chariot, ver. 3. See note there.

⁶ Lit. *seek, demand, or require.*

⁷ Or *anger to bear*; Heb. *rest*.

THE RESULT OF THE VISIONS: THE CROWNING OF THE KING OF ISRAEL (Chap. vi. 9-15)

The heathen overthrown, Israel is free, and may have her king again. Therefore Zechariah is ordered—it seems on the day on which he received the Visions—to visit a deputation from the captivity in Babylon, Heldai, Tobiyah and Yedayah, at the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah, where they have just arrived; and to select from the gifts they have brought silver and gold to make circlets for a crown. Our text assigns this crown to Joshua, the High Priest, but, as we have remarked, and will presently prove in the notes to the translation, the original text assigned it to Zerubbabel, the civil head of the community, and gave Joshua, the priest, a place at his right hand—the two to act in concord. The text has suffered other injuries, easy to emend; and the end has been broken off in the middle of a sentence.

vi. 9-15. *And the Word of Yahweh came to me, saying: Take from the Golah,¹ from Heldai,² from Tobiyahu and from Yeda'yah; and go on the same day, yea, go thou to the house of Yoshiyah, son of Sephanyah, whither they have arrived from Babylon.³ And thou shalt take silver and gold, and make a crown, and set it on the head of*

¹ The collective name for the Jews in exile.

² LXX, παρὰ τῶν ἀρχόντων, מַחֲרִים; but since an accusative is wanted to express the articles taken, Hitzig proposes to read מַחֲמָדֵי, *My precious things*. The LXX reads the other two names καὶ παρὰ τῶν χρησίων αὐτῆς καὶ παρὰ τῶν ἐπεγνωκότων αὐτήν.

³ The construction of 10 is clumsy; above it is rendered literally. Wellhausen proposes to delete *and do thou go . . . to the house of*, and take Yoshiyah's name as a fourth with the others, reading *who have come from Babylon*. This is to cut the knot.

. .¹ And say to him : Thus saith Yahweh of Hosts, Behold a man called Branch ; from under him shall a branch spring, and he shall build the Temple of Yahweh. Yea, he shall build Yahweh's Temple,² and he shall wear the royal majesty and sit and rule upon his throne, and Yehoshu'a³ shall be priest on his right hand,⁴ and there will be a counsel of peace between the two of them.⁵ And the crown shall be for Heldai⁶ and Tobiyah and Yeda'yah, and for the courtesy⁷ of the son of Şephanyah, for a memorial in the Temple of Yahweh. And the far-away

¹ Heb. has *Yehoshu'a son of Yehosedek, the high priest*, but there is reason to suppose that the crown was meant for Zerubbabel, and that the name of Joshua was inserted instead later, when the high priest was also the king—see note 5 below. For these reasons Ewald had supposed that the verse was genuine, but that there had fallen out of it the words *and on the head of Zerubbabel*. Ewald found a proof of this in the plural form עטרות, which he rendered *crowns*. (So also Wildeboer, *A.T. Litteratur*, p. 297.) But עטרות is *crown*; see ver. 11, where it is followed by a singular verb. The plural form refers to the circlets of which it was woven.

² Some critics omit the repetition.

³ So Wellhausen proposes to insert. The name was at least understood in the original text.

⁴ So LXX. Heb. *on this throne*.

⁵ With this phrase, vouched for by both Heb. and LXX, the rest of the received text cannot be harmonised. There were two : one the priest just mentioned who is to be at the right of the crowned. The received text makes this crowned one to be the high priest Joshua. But if there are two and the priest is secondary, the crowned one must be Zerubbabel, whom Haggai designated as Messiah. Nor is it difficult to see why, in a later age, when the high priest was sovereign in Israel, Joshua's name was inserted in place of Zerubbabel's, and at the same time the phrase *priest at his right hand*, to which LXX testifies in harmony with *the two of them*, should have been altered to the reading of the received text, *priest upon his throne*. So Smend, *A.T. Rel. Gesch.*, 343 n., and Nowack.

⁶ Heb. חֵלְדַּי, Hēlem, but the reading Heldai, חֵלְדַּי, is proved by the previous occurrence of the name and by Syr. and the LXX reading τοῖς ὑπομένουσιν, i.e., from root חָלַד, *to last*.

⁷ חֵדַּד, but Wellhausen and others take it as abbreviation or misreading for the name of Yoshiyah (see ver. 10).

*shall come and build at the Temple of Yahweh, and ye shall know that Yahweh of Hosts hath sent me to you ; and it shall be if ye hearken to the voice of Yahweh your God . . .*¹

¹ Here the verse and paragraph break off suddenly in the middle of a sentence, which some think might be expanded somewhat after Deut. xxviii. 1-14 (Marti). On the passage see Smend, 343 and 345.

CHAPTER XXII

THE ANGELS OF THE VISIONS

ZECHARIAH I. 7-VI. 8

AMONG the influences of the Exile which contributed the material of Zechariah's Visions we included a considerable development of Israel's belief in Angels. The general subject is so large, and Angels play so many parts in the Visions, that it is necessary to devote to them a separate chapter.

From the earliest times the Hebrews had conceived their Divine King as surrounded by a court of ministers, who besides celebrating His glory went forth from His presence to execute His will upon earth. In this latter capacity they were called Messengers, Male'akim, which the Greeks translated Angeloi, and so gave us our Angels. The origin of this conception is wrapt in obscurity. It may have been partly due to a belief, shared by all early peoples, in the existence of super-human beings inferior to the gods,¹ but even without this it must have sprung up in the natural tendency to provide the royal deity of a people with a court, an army and servants. In the pious minds of early Israel there must have been a necessity to believe and develop this—a necessity imposed *firstly* by the belief

¹ So Robertson Smith, art. 'Angels' in the *Encycl. Brit.*, 9th ed.

in Yahweh's residence as confined to one spot, Sinai or Jerusalem, from which He Himself went forth only upon great occasions to the deliverance of His people ; and *secondly* by the unwillingness to conceive of His personal appearance on missions of a menial nature or to represent Him in the human form in which, according to primitive ideas, He could alone hold converse with men.

We can easily understand how a religion, which was above all a religion of revelation, should accept such popular conceptions in its record of the appearance of God and His word in human life. Accordingly, in the earliest documents of the Hebrews, we find angels who bring to Israel the blessings, curses and commands of Yahweh.¹ Apart from this duty and their human appearance, these beings are not conceived as endowed either with character or, if we may judge by their namelessness,² with individuality. They are the Word of God personified. Acting as God's mouthpiece, they are merged in Him, and so completely that they often speak of themselves by the Divine *I*.³ 'The *function* of an Angel so overshadows his *personality* that the Old Testament does not ask who or what this Angel is, but what he does. And the answer to the last question is, that he represents God to man so directly and fully that when he speaks or acts God Himself is felt to speak or act.'⁴ Besides the carriage of the Divine Word, angels bring back to their Lord report of all that happens : kings are said to be *as wise as the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all the things that are in the earth*.⁵ They are also employed in the deliverance and discipline of His

¹ So already in Deborah's Song, Judg. v. 23, and through J and E.

² Cf. especially Gen. xxxii. 29.

³ Judg. vi. 12 ff.

⁴ Robertson Smith, as above.

⁵ 2 Sam. xiv. 20.

people.¹ By them come the pestilence,² and the restraint of those who set themselves against God's will.³

Now the prophets before the Exile had so spiritual a conception of God, worked so immediately from His presence, and were so convinced of His personal interest in the affairs of His people, that they felt no room for Angels between Him and their hearts, and they do not employ Angels, except when Isaiah in his inaugural vision penetrates to the heavenly palace and court of the Most High.⁴ Even when Amos sees a plummet laid to the walls of Jerusalem, it is by the hands of the Lord Himself,⁵ and we have not encountered an Angel in the mediation of the Word to any of the prophets whom we have studied. But Angels reappear, though not under the name, in the visions of Ezekiel, the first prophet of the Exile. They are in human form, and he calls them *Men*. Some execute God's wrath upon Jerusalem,⁶ and one, whose appearance is as bronze, acts as the interpreter of God's will to the prophet, and instructs him in the details of the building of City and Temple.⁷ When the glory of the Lord appears and Yahweh Himself speaks to the prophet out of the Temple, this *Man* stands by the prophet,⁸ distinct from the Deity, and afterwards continues his work of explanation. 'Therefore,' as Dr. Davidson remarks, 'it is not the sense of distance to which God is removed that causes Ezekiel to create these intermediaries.' The necessity for them rather arises from the same natural feeling, which we have suggested as giving rise to the earliest conceptions of Angels: the

¹ Exod. xiv. 19 (?), xxiii. 20, etc.; Josh. v. 13.

² 2 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17; 2 Kings xix. 35; Exod. xii. 23. In Eccles. vii. 6 this destroying angel is the minister of God: cf. Ps. lxxviii. 49b, *hurtful angels*—Cheyne, *Origin of Psalter*, p. 157.

³ Balaam: Num. xxii. 23 f., 31.

⁴ vi. 2-6.

⁵ Vol. I, pp. 111 f.

⁶ ix.

⁷ xl. 3 ff.

⁸ xliii. 6.

unwillingness to engage the Person of God in the subordinate task of explaining the details of the Temple. Note, too, how the Divine Voice, which speaks to Ezekiel out of the Temple, blends and becomes one with the *Man* standing at his side. Ezekiel's Angel-interpreter is simply one function of the Word of God.

Many of the features of Ezekiel's Angels appear in those of Zechariah. *The four smiths* or smiters of the four horns recall the six executioners of the wicked in Jerusalem.¹ Like Ezekiel's Interpreter, they are called *Men*,² and like him one appears as Zechariah's instructor and guide : *he who talked with me*.³ But while Zechariah calls these beings *Men*, he also gives them the ancient name, which Ezekiel had not used, of Male'akim, *messengers, angels*. The Instructor is *the Angel who talked with me*. In the first Vision, *the Man riding the brown horse, the Man that stood among the myrtles*, is *the Angel of Yahweh that stood among the myrtles*.⁴ The Interpreter is also called *the Angel of Yahweh*, and if our text of the First Vision be correct, the two of them are curiously mingled, as if both were functions of the same Word of God, and in personality not to be distinguished from each other. The Reporting Angel among the myrtles takes up the duty of the Interpreting Angel and explains the Vision to the Prophet. In the Fourth Vision this dissolving view is carried further, and the Angel of Yahweh is interchangeable with Yahweh Himself ;⁵ just as in the Vision of Ezekiel the Divine Voice from the Glory and the Man standing beside the prophet are mingled. Again in the Fourth Vision we hear of those *who stand in the presence of*

¹ Zech. i. 18 ff. ; Ezek. ix. 1 ff.

² Zech. i. 8 : even in Daniel is *the man* Gabriel—ix. 21.

³ i. 9, 19 ; ii. 3 ; iv. 1, 4, 5 ; v. 5, 10 ; vi. 4. But see above, pp. 257 f.

⁴ i. 8, 10, 11.

⁵ iii. 1 compared with 2.

Yahweh,¹ and in the Eighth of angels coming from His presence with commissions upon the whole earth.²

In the Visions of Zechariah, then, as in the earlier books, we see the Lord of all the earth, surrounded by a court of angels, whom He sends forth in human form to interpret His Word and execute His will, and in their doing of this there is the same indistinctness of individuality, the same predominance of function over personality. As with Ezekiel, one stands out more clearly than the rest, to be the prophet's interpreter, whom, as in the earlier visions of angels, Zechariah calls *my lord*,³ but even he melts into the figures of the rest. These are old and borrowed elements in Zechariah's doctrine of Angels. But he has added to them in several particulars, which make his Visions an intermediate stage between the Book of Ezekiel and the intricate angelology of later Judaism.

In the first place, Zechariah is the earliest prophet who introduces orders and ranks among the angels. In his Fourth Vision the Angel of *Yahweh* is the Divine Judge *before whom* ⁴ Joshua appears with the Adversary. He also has others standing *before him* ⁵ to execute his sentences. In the Third Vision, again, the Interpreting Angel does not communicate directly with *Yahweh*, but receives his words from another Angel who has come forth.⁶ All these are symptoms, that even with a prophet, who keenly felt like Zechariah the ethical directness of God's word and its pervasiveness through public life, there had yet begun to increase those

¹ iii. 6, 7.

² vi. 5.

³ i. 9, etc.

⁴ iii. 1. *Stand before* is here used forensically: cf. the N.T. phrases to *stand before God*, Rev. xx. 12; *before the judgement-seat of Christ*, Rom. xiv. 10; and *be acquitted*, Luke xxi. 36.

⁵ iii. 4. Here the phrase is used domestically of servants in the presence of their master. See above, p. 286 n. 1.

⁶ ii. 3, 4.

feelings of God's sublimity and awfulness, which in the later thought of Israel lifted Him so far from men, and created so complex a host of intermediaries, human and superhuman, between the worshipping heart and the Throne of Grace. We can best estimate the difference in this respect between Zechariah and the earlier prophets whom we have studied by remarking that his characteristic phrase *talked with me*, literally *spoke in* or *by me*, which he uses of the Interpreting Angel, is used by Habakkuk of God Himself.¹ To the same impressions of the Godhead is perhaps due the first appearance of the Angel as intercessor. Amos, Isaiah and Jeremiah themselves directly interceded with God for the people; but with Zechariah it is the Interpreting Angel who intercedes, and who in return receives the Divine comfort.² In this angelic function, the first of its kind in Scripture, we see the small and explicable beginnings of a belief destined to assume enormous dimensions in the development of the Church's worship. The supplication of Angels, the faith in their intercession and in the prevailing prayers of the righteous dead, which has been so egregiously multiplied in certain sections of Christendom, may be traced to the same increasing sense of the distance and awfulness of God, but is to be corrected by the faith Christ taught us of the nearness of our Father in Heaven, and of His immediate care of His every human child.

The intercession of the Angel in the First Vision is also a step towards that identification of special Angels with different peoples which we find in the Book of Daniel. This tells us of heavenly princes not only for Israel—*Michael, your prince, the great prince which*

¹ Hab. ii. 1 : cf. Num. xii. 6-8.

² First Vision, i. 12.

*standeth up for the children of thy people*¹—but for the heathen nations, a conception, the beginnings of which we see in a prophecy perhaps not far from being contemporaneous with Zechariah.² Zechariah's Vision of a hierarchy among the angels was also destined to development. The head of the patrol among the myrtles, and the Judge-Angel before whom Joshua appears, are the first Archangels. We know how these were further specialised, and had even personalities and names given them by Jewish and Christian writers.³

Among the Angels in the Old Testament we have seen some charged with powers of hindrance and destruction—a *troop of angels of evil*.⁴ They too are the servants of God, who is the author of ill as well as of good,⁵ and the instruments of His wrath. But the temptation of men is also part of His Providence. Where wilful souls have to be misled, the *spirit* who does so, as in Ahab's case, comes from Yahweh's presence.⁶ All these spirits are as devoid of character and personality as the rest of the angelic host. They work evil as mere instruments: neither malice nor falseness is attributed to them. They are not rebel nor fallen angels, but obedient to Yahweh. Nay, like Ezekiel's and Zechariah's Angels of the Word, the Angel who tempts David to number the people is interchangeable with God Himself.⁷ Kindred to the duty of tempting men is that of discipline, in its forms both of restraining or accusing the guilty, and of vexing the righteous in order to test them. For both of these

¹ x. 21, xii. 1.

² Isa. xxiv. 21.

³ Daniel x, xii; Tobit xii. 15; Book of Enoch *passim*; Jude 9; Rev. viii. 2, etc.

⁴ Ps. lxxviii. 49; see p. 304.

⁵ Amos iii. 6.

⁶ 1 Kings xxii. 20 ff.

⁷ 2 Sam. xxiv. 1; 1 Chron. xxi. 1. Though here difference of age between the two documents may have caused the difference of view.

the same verb is used, *to satan*,¹ in the general sense of *withstanding*, or antagonising. The Angel of Yahweh stood in Balaam's way *a satan for him*.² The noun, *the Satan*, is used repeatedly of a human foe.³ But in two passages, of which Zechariah's Fourth Vision is one, and the other the Prologue to Job,⁴ the name is given to an Angel, one of *the sons of Elohim*, or Divine powers who receive their commission from Yahweh. The noun is not yet, what it afterwards became,⁵ a proper name, but has the definite article, *the Adversary* or *Accuser*—that is, the Angel to whom this function was assigned. With Zechariah his business is the official one of persecutor in the supreme court of Yahweh, and when his work is done he disappears. Yet, before he goes we see for the first time with any angel a gleam of character. This is revealed by the Lord's rebuke of him.⁶ There is something blameworthy in the accusation of Joshua : not false witness, for Israel's guilt is patent in the foul garments of their High Priest, but hardness or malice, that would seek to prevent the Divine grace. In the Book of Job *the Satan* is also a function, even here no fallen or rebel angel, but one of God's court,⁷ the instrument of discipline or chastisement. Yet, in that he himself suggests his cruelties and is represented as officious in their infliction, a character is imputed to him more clearly than in Zechariah's Vision. But the Satan still shares that identification with his function which we have seen to characterise all the angels of the Old

¹ Two forms are שָׂטָן, *satan*, and שָׂטָם, *satam*, this the older.

² Num. xxii. 22, 32. The verb in Gen. xxvii. 41, Zech. iii. 1.

³ 1 Sam. xxix. 4 ; 2 Sam. xix. 22 ; 1 Kings v. 4, xi. 14, etc.

⁴ Zech. iii. 1 ff. ; Job i. 6 ff.

⁵ 1 Chron. xxi. 1.

⁶ iii. 2.

⁷ i. 6.

Testament, and therefore he disappears from the drama so soon as his place in its argument is over.¹

In this description of the development of Israel's doctrine of Angels, and of Zechariah's contributions to it, we have not touched on the question whether the development was assisted by Israel's contact with the Persian religion and with the system of Angels which the latter contains. For several reasons the question is difficult. But so far as present evidence goes, it makes for a negative answer. Scholars, who are in no way prejudiced against the theory of a large Persian influence upon Israel, declare that the religion of Persia affected the Jewish doctrine of Angels 'only in secondary points,' such as their 'number and personality, and the existence of demons and evil spirits.'² Our own discussion has shown us that Zechariah's Angels, in spite of the new features they introduce, are in substance one with the Angels of pre-exilic Israel. Even the Satan is primarily a function, and one of the servants of God. If he has developed an immoral character, this cannot be attributed to the influence of Persian belief in a Spirit of evil opposed to the Spirit of good in the universe, but may be explained by the native, or selfish, resentment of Israel against their prosecutor before the bar of Yahweh. Nor can we fail to remark that this character of evil appears in the Satan, not, as in the Persian religion, in

¹ See Davidson (*Cambr. Bible for Schools*) on Job i. 6-12, especially 9: 'The Satan of this book may show the beginnings of a personal malevolence against man, but he is still rigidly subordinated to Heaven, and in all he does subserves its interests. His function is as the minister of God to try the sincerity of man; hence when his work of trial is over he is no more found, and no place is given him among the *dramatis personæ* of the poem.'

² Cheyne, *The Origin of the Psalter*, p. 272. Read carefully on this point the important remarks on pp. 270 ff. and 281 f.

general opposition to goodness, but as thwarting that saving grace which was peculiarly Yahweh's. *And Yahweh said to the Satan, Yahweh rebuke thee, O Satan, yea, Yahweh who hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee! Is not this a brand plucked from the burning?*

CHAPTER XXIII

'THE SEED OF PEACE'

ZECHARIAH VII, VIII

THE Visions have revealed the removal of the guilt of the land, the restoration of Israel to their standing before God, the revival of the national institutions, and God's will to destroy the kingdoms of the world. With the Temple built, Israel should be again in the position which she enjoyed before the Exile. Zechariah, therefore, proceeds to exhort his people to put away the fasts which the Exile made necessary, and address themselves, as of old, to the virtues and duties of the civic life. And he introduces his orations to this end by a natural appeal to the experience of the former days.

The occasion came to him when the Temple had been building for two years, and some of its services were probably resumed.¹ A deputation of Jews appeared in Jerusalem and raised the question of the continuance of the great Fasts of the Exile. Who the deputation were is not certain: we ought either to delete *Bethel* from the second verse, or take it as part of the name following it, and read either *Beth-el-sar' eser sent Regem-Melekh and his men to the house of*

¹ Cf. vii. 3: *the priests which were of the house of Yahweh.*

Yahweh to *propitiate* Yahweh, or the house of El-sar' eser sent Regem-Melekh.¹ It has been thought that they came from the Jews in Babylon : this would agree with their arrival in the ninth month to inquire about a fast in the fifth. But Zechariah's answer is addressed to Jews in Judæa. The deputation limited their inquiry to the fast of the fifth month, which commemorated the burning of the Temple and the City, now practically restored. But with a breadth of view which reveals the prophet rather than the priest, Zechariah replies, in the following chapter, upon all the fasts by which Israel for seventy years had bewailed her ruin and exile. He instances two, that of the fifth month, and that of the seventh, the date of the murder of Gedaliah, when the last remnant of a Jewish state was swept away.² With a boldness that recalls Amos to the letter, Zechariah asks his people whether in those fasts they fasted at all to their God. Yahweh had not charged them, and in fasting they had fasted for themselves, as in eating and drinking they had eaten and drunken for themselves. They should rather hearken to the words He really sent them. In a passage, the meaning of which has been perverted by the intrusion of the eighth verse, which therefore should be deleted, Zechariah recalls what those words of Yahweh had been in former times when the land was inhabited and the national life in full course. They were not ceremonial ; they were ethical : they commanded justice, kindness, and the care of the helpless and the poor. And it was in consequence of the people's disobedience to those words that the ruin came upon them which they now annually mourned. The moral is obvious if unexpressed. Let them drop their fasts,

¹ See note on next page after this one.

² Jer. xli. 2 ; 2 Kings xxv. 25.

and practise virtues, the neglect of which had made their fasts a necessity. It is a sane, practical word, and makes us feel how much Zechariah has inherited of the temper of Amos and Isaiah. He rests, as before, upon the letter of the ancient oracles, but only so as to bring out their spirit. With such an example of the use of ancient Scripture, it is deplorable that so many, both Jews and Christians, should have devoted themselves to the letter at the expense of the spirit.

vii. 1-7. *And it came to pass in the fourth year of Darius the king, that the Word of Yahweh came to Zechariah on the fourth of the ninth month, Kislev. For there sent to the house of Yahweh, El-sar' eser and Regem-Melekh and his men,¹ to propitiate² Yahweh, to ask of the priests which were in the house of Yahweh of Hosts and of the prophets as follows: Shall I weep in the fifth month with fasting as I have done these many years? And the Word of Yahweh of Hosts came to me saying: Speak to all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying: When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and in the seventh month,³ and this for seventy years, did ye fast at all to Me? And when ye eat and when ye drink, are not ye the eaters and ye the drinkers? Are not these⁴ the words which Yahweh proclaimed by the hand of former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and at peace,*

¹ The text is difficult if not impossible: *And Bethel sent Sar' eser* (without accusative) *and Regem-Melekh and his men*. Wellhausen points out that Sar' eser is a defective name, requiring the name or title of deity in front of it, which Marti finds in the last syllable of *Bethel*, and reads '*El-sar' eser*. It is tempting to find in the first syllable of Bethel the remnant of the phrase *to the house of Yahweh*.

² Lit. *To stroke the face of*.

³ The fifth month Jerusalem fell, the seventh month Gedaliah was murdered: Jer. lii. 12 f.; 2 Kings xxv. 8 f., 25.

⁴ So LXX. Heb. has acc. sign before *words*, perhaps implying *Is it not rather necessary to do the words?* etc.

with her cities about her, and the Negeb and the Shephelah were inhabited?

vii. 9-14.¹ *Thus spake Yahweh of Hosts: Judge true judgement, and practise towards each other leal love and mercy; oppress neither widow nor orphan, stranger nor poor, and think not evil in your hearts of one another. But they refused to hearken, and turned a rebellious shoulder,² and their ears they dulled from listening. And their heart they made adamant, so as not to hear the Torah and the Words which Yahweh of Hosts sent through His Spirit by the hand of the former prophets; and there was great wrath from Yahweh of Hosts. And it came to pass that, as He had called and they heard not, so they shall call and I will not hear, said Yahweh of Hosts, but I will whirl³ them away among all nations whom they know not. And the land was laid waste behind them, without any to pass to and fro, yea they laid the pleasant land desolate.*

There follow ten other short oracles: ch. viii. Whether all of this decalogue are to be dated from the same time as the answer to the deputation about the fasts is uncertain. Some seem rather to be earlier, for they reflect the situation, and even the words, of Haggai's oracles, and represent the advent of Yahweh to Jerusalem as still future. But they return to the question of the fasts, treating it more comprehensively, and they close with a promise, fitly spoken as the Temple grew to completion, of the coming of the heathen to worship at Jerusalem.

¹ Omit ver. 8, *And the Word of Yahweh came to Zechariah, saying.* It is obviously a gloss by a scribe who did not notice that the כה אמר of ver. 9 is God's statement by the former prophets.

² Cf. the phrase *with one shoulder*, i.e. unanimously.

³ So Heb. and LXX; but perhaps we ought to point *and I whirled them away*, taking the clause with the next.

We have noticed the charm and simplicity of these prophecies,¹ and there is little to add except their translation. As with the older prophets, and especially the Evangelist of the Exile, they start from the love of Yahweh for His people, to which nothing is impossible ;² they promise a complete return of the scattered Jews to their land, and are not content except with the assurance of a world converted to the faith of their God. With Haggai Zechariah promises the end of the poverty of the little colony ; and he adds his own notes of a reign of peace to be used for hearty labour, bringing forth prosperity. Only let men be true and just and kind, thinking no evil of each other, as in those hard days when hunger and the fierce rivalry for sustenance made every one's neighbour his enemy, and the petty life, devoid of interests for the common weal, filled their hearts with envy and malice. For ourselves the profit of these beautiful oracles is their lesson that the remedy for the sordid tempers and cruel hatreds, engendered by the struggle for existence, is found in civic and religious hopes, in a noble ideal for the national life, and in the assurance that God's Love is at the back of all, with nothing impossible to it. Amid these glories, however, the heart will probably thank Zechariah most for his immortal picture of the streets of the new Jerusalem : old men and women sitting in the sun, boys and girls playing in all the open places. The motive of this, as we saw, was found in the circumstances of his day. Like many another emigration, for religion's sake, from the heart of civilisation to a barren coast, the colony of Jerusalem consisted chiefly of men, young and in middle life. The barren years gave no encouragement to marriage. The warfare with

¹ See above, p. 266.

² Cf. especially Isa. xl. ff.

neighbouring tribes allowed few to reach grey hairs. It was a rough and a hard society, unblessed by the two benedictions of life, childhood and old age. But this should be changed, and Jerusalem filled with placid old men and women, and joyous boys and girls. The oracle, we say, had its motive in Zechariah's day. But what an oracle for our times ! Whether in the cities of the old world, where many may not hope for a quiet old age, sitting in the sun, and the children's days of play are shortened by premature toil and knowledge of evil ; or in the newest fringes of the new world, where men's hardness and coarseness are, in the struggle for gold, unawed by reverence for age and unsoftened by the fellowship of childhood—Zechariah's great promise is equally needed. Even there shall it be fulfilled if men will remember his conditions—that the first regard of a community, however straitened in means, be the provision of religion, that truth and wholehearted justice abound in the gates, with love and loyalty in every heart towards every other.

viii. 1-23. *And the Word of Yahweh of Hosts came, saying :—*

2. *Thus saith Yahweh of Hosts : I am zealous for Şion with great zeal, and with great indignation am I zealous for her.*

3. *Thus saith Yahweh : I am returned to Şion, and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem shall be called the City of Troth,¹ and the mountain of Yahweh of Hosts the Holy Mountain.*

4, 5. *Thus saith Yahweh of Hosts : Old men and old women shall yet sit on the broad spaces of Jerusalem, each with staff in hand, for fulness of days ; and the broad spaces of the city shall be full of boys and of girls playing on her broad spaces.*

¹ Isa. i. 26.

6. Thus saith Yahweh of Hosts : *Because it seems too wonderful to the remnant of this people in those days, shall it also to Me seem too wonderful ?—Rede of Yahweh of Hosts.*

7, 8. Thus saith Yahweh of Hosts : *Behold I am saving My people out of the land of the sunrise and out of the land of the sunset ; and I will bring them in, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and they shall be to Me for a people,¹ and I will be their God, in troth and in righteousness.*

9-13. Thus saith Yahweh of Hosts : *Strengthen ye your hands, O ye who have heard in such days such words from the mouth of the prophets, since² the day the House of Yahweh of Hosts was founded : the Temple was to be built ! For before those days there was no gain for man,³ and of gain by cattle there was none ; and neither for him that went out nor for him that came in was there peace from the adversary, for I set every man against his neighbour. But not now as in past days am I to the remnant of this people—Rede of Yahweh of Hosts. For I am sowing the seed of peace.⁴ The vine shall yield her fruit, and the land shall yield her increase, and the heavens yield their dew, and I will give them all for a heritage to the remnant of this people. And it shall come to pass, that as ye have been a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so will I save you and ye shall be a blessing ! Be not afraid, strengthen your hands !*

¹ Not merely *My people* (Wellhausen), but their return shall constitute them a people once more. The quotation is from Hosea ii. 25.

² So LXX.

³ *He that earned wages earned them into a bag with holes*, Haggai i. 6.

⁴ Read *כי זרע השלום* for *כי אזרעה השלום* of the text, *for the seed of peace*. LXX makes *זרע* a verb. Cf. Hosea ii. 23 ff., which the next clauses show to be in the mind of our prophet. Klostermann and Nowack prefer *זרעה שלום*, *her (the remnant's) seed shall be peace*.

14-17. *For thus saith Yahweh of Hosts : As I have planned to do ill to you, when your fathers provoked Me, saith Yahweh of Hosts, and I did not relent, so have I turned and planned in these days to do good to Jerusalem and the house of Judah. Be not afraid ! These are the things ye shall do : Speak truth to each other ; truth and wholesome judgement decree in your gates ; and think no evil of each other in your hearts, nor take pleasure in perjury : for all these do I hate—Rede of Yahweh.*

18. *And the Word of Yahweh of Hosts came to me, saying :—*

19. *Thus saith Yahweh of Hosts : The fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall become to the house of Judah rejoicing and gladness and happy feasts.¹ But love ye truth and peace.*

20-22. *Thus saith Yahweh of Hosts : There shall yet come peoples and citizens of great cities ; and the citizens of one city² will go to another, saying : Let us surely go to propitiate Yahweh, and enquire of Yahweh of Hosts ! Now let me go too ! And many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek Yahweh of Hosts in Jerusalem and to propitiate Yahweh.*

23. *Thus saith Yahweh of Hosts : In those days ten men, of all tongues of the nations, shall take hold of the skirt of a Jew and say, We will go with you, for we have heard God is with you.*

¹ In the tenth month the siege of Jerusalem had begun (2 Kings xxv. 1) ; on the ninth of the fourth month Jerusalem was taken (Jer. xxxix. 2) ; on the seventh of the fifth, City and Temple were burnt down (2 Kings xxv. 8) ; in the seventh month Gedaliah was assassinated and the poor relics of a Jewish state swept from the land (Jer. xli.). See above, pp. 29 ff.

² LXX, *the citizens of five cities will go to one.*

'MALACHI'

Have we not all One Father ? Why then are we unfaithful to each other ?

The lips of a Priest guard knowledge, and men seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the Angel of Yahweh of Hosts.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE BOOK OF 'MALACHI'

THIS book, the last in the prophetic canon, bears the title *Burden or Oracle of the Word of Yahweh to Israel by the hand of mal'akhi*. Since at least the second century of our era the word has been understood as a proper name, Malachi or Malachias. But there are objections to this, as well as to the genuineness of the whole title, and critics almost all agree that the book was originally anonymous.

It is true that neither in form nor in meaning is there an insuperable obstacle to our understanding *mal'akhi* as the name of a person. If so, however, it cannot have been, as some suggest, an abbreviation of Mal'akhiah, for, according to the analogy of other names of such formation, this could only express the impossible meaning *Yahweh is Angel*.¹ But, as it stands, it might have meant *My Angel* or *Messenger*, or it may be taken as an adjective, *Angelicus*.² Either meaning would form a natural name for a Jewish child, and a suitable one for a prophet. There is evidence,

¹ מלאכיה or מלאכיהו. To judge from other cases of the same formation (*e.g.*, Abiyah = Yahweh is Father, and not Father of Yahweh), this name, if ever extant, could not have borne the meaning, which W. R. Smith, Cornill, Kirkpatrick, etc., suppose it must have done, of *Angel of Yahweh*. These scholars, it should be added, oppose the theory that it is a proper name.

² Cf. the suggested meaning of Haggai, Festus. Above, p. 229.

however, that some of the earliest Jewish interpreters did not think of the title as containing the name of a person. The Septuagint read *by the hand of His messenger*,¹ *malè'akho*; and the Targum of Jonathan, while retaining *malè'akhi* rendered it *My messenger*, adding that it was Ezra the Scribe who was thus designated.² This opinion was adopted by Calvin.

Criticism has shown that, whether the word was originally intended as a personal name or not, it was an artificial one borrowed from ch. iii. 1, *Behold, I send My messenger, malè'akhi*, for the title, which itself has been added by the editor of the Twelve Prophets in the form in which we now have them. The peculiar words, *Burden* or *Oracle of the Word of Yahweh*, occur nowhere else than in the titles of two prophecies appended to the Book of Zechariah, ix. 1 and xii. 1, and immediately preceding this Book of 'Malachi.' In ix. 1 *the Word of Yahweh* belongs to the text; *Burden* or *Oracle* has been inserted before it as a title; then the whole phrase has been inserted as a title in xii. 1. These two pieces are anonymous, and nothing is more likely than that another anonymous prophecy should have received, when attached to them, the same heading.³ The argument is not final, but the most probable explanation of the data, and agrees with the other facts. The cumulative force

¹ And added, *lay it to your hearts*: ἐν χειρὶ ἀγγέλου αὐτοῦ· θέσθε δὴ ἐπὶ τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν. Bachmann (*A.T. Untersuch.*, 1894, pp. 109 ff.) takes this addition as a translation of וְשִׁמוּ כָלֵב, and suggests the corruption of an original וְשִׁמוּ כָלֵב, and *his name was Kaleb*. But the reading וְשִׁמוּ כָלֵב is not the equivalent of the Greek phrase.

² מִלְאָכִי דִּיתְקָרִי שְׁמִי עֶזְרָא סָפְרָא.

³ See Stade, *Z.A.T.W.*, 1881, p. 14; 1882, p. 308; Cornill, *Einleitung*, 4th ed., pp. 207 f.

of all that we have stated—the uncertainty of *malē'akhi* being a personal name, the fact that the earliest versions do not treat it as such, the obvious suggestion for its invention in the *malē'akhi* of iii. 1, the absence of a father's name and place of residence, and the character of the whole title—is enough for the opinion that our book was, like so much more in the Old Testament, originally anonymous.¹ The author attacks the religious authorities of his day; he belongs to a pious remnant of his people, who are overborne and perhaps oppressed by the majority (iii. 16 ff.). In these facts, which are all we know of his personality, he found sufficient reason for not attaching his name to his prophecy.

It is right that I should record, in opposition to the above conclusion, reached in 1898 and still held, this of Alexander von Bulmerincq of Dorpat reached by 1926, after probably the most exhaustive examination

¹ So (besides Calvin, who takes it as a title) Hengstenberg in his *Christology of the O.T.*, Ewald, Kuenen, Reuss, Stade, W. R. Smith, Cornill, Wellhausen, Kirkpatrick (probably), Wildeboer, Nowack, Budde, Torrey, Marti, Duhm, Sellin, J. M. P. Smith. But Hitzig, Vatke, Nägelsbach and Volck (in Herzog), Von Orelli, Pusey, Robertson and especially von Bulmerincq (see above) hold it to be a personal name—Pusey with this qualification, 'that the prophet may have framed it for himself,' similarly Orelli. They support their opinion by the fact that even the LXX entitle the book *Μαλαχίας*; that the word was regarded as a proper name in the early Church, and is a possible name for a Hebrew. In opposition to the idea that it was borrowed from iii. 1, Hitzig suggests the converse that in the latter the prophet plays upon his own name. But none of these critics meets the objections to the name drawn from the character of the title and its relations to Zech. ix. 1, xii. 1. The supposed name of the prophet gave rise to the legend supported by many Fathers that Malachi, like Haggai and John Baptist, was an incarnate angel. This is stated and condemned by Jerome, *Comm. ad Hag.*, I, 13, but held by Origen, Tertullian and others. The existence of such an opinion is itself proof for the impersonal character of the name. As with the rest of the prophets, Christian tradition furnishes this one with the outline of a biography. See (Pseud-) Epiphanius and other writers quoted, pp. 229 f.

of the evidence afforded by the text, by tradition and by ancient and modern criticism that has ever been applied to any single Book of the Bible.¹ He concludes, 'The meaning of the name *Male'achi* involves no hindrance to explaining it as a proper name,' 'the real name of the author under which he was known to his contemporaries.'² While I admire the fullness and care of the argument on which this conclusion is attained, I am not convinced by it.

The book is also undated, but reflects its period almost as clearly as do the dated Books of Haggai and Zechariah. The conquest of Edom by the Nabateans, which took place during the Exile,³ is past.⁴ The Jews are under a Persian viceroy.⁵ They are in touch with a power which does not tyrannise over them, for this Book is the first to predict no judgement upon the heathen, and the first to acknowledge that among these the true God is worshipped *from the rising to the setting of the sun*.⁶ The only judgement is on the disobedient portion of Israel, whose arrogance and success have cast true Israelites into despair.⁷ This reveals a time when the Jews were well treated by their Persian lords. The reign must be that of Artaxerxes Longhand, 464-424.

The Temple is finished,⁸ and years enough have elapsed to disappoint those fervid hopes with which about 518 Zechariah expected its completion. The congregation is grown worldly and careless. In particular

¹ *Der Prophet Maleachi*, Band I, Einleitung in das Buch, 1926. No fewer than forty-six pages (3-49) are devoted to the evidence and argument.

² Pp. 28, 36; see also pp. 32-35.

³ See on Obadiah, p. 168, and on the passage itself.

⁴ i. 2-5.

⁵ i. 8.

⁶ i. 11: verbs are in the present, not as in A.V. in the future.

⁷ *Passim*: especially iii. 13 ff., iv 1.

⁸ i. 10; iii. 1, 10.

the priests are corrupt and partial in administering the Law.¹ There have been many marriages with the heathen women of the land;² and the laity have failed to pay the tithes and other dues to the Temple.³ These are evils against which we find strenuous measures by Ezra, who returned from Babylon in 458,⁴ and by Nehemiah, who visited Jerusalem as governor for the first time in 445 and for the second in 433. Besides, 'the religious spirit of the Book is that of the prayers of Ezra and Nehemiah. A strong sense of the unique privileges of the children of Jacob, the objects of electing love,⁵ the children of the Divine Father,⁶ is combined with an equally strong assurance of God's righteousness amidst the many miseries that pressed on the unhappy inhabitants of Judæa. . . . Obedience to the Law is the sure path to blessedness.'⁷ But the question remains whether 'Malachi' prepared for, assisted or followed up the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah. An ancient tradition already noted⁸ assigned the authorship to Ezra himself.

Criticism has been divided among the years immediately before Ezra's arrival in 458, those immediately before Nehemiah's first visit in 445, those between his first government and his second, and those after Nehemiah's disappearance from Jerusalem. But the years in which Nehemiah held office may be excluded, because the Jews are represented as bringing gifts to the governor, which Nehemiah tells us he did not allow to be brought to him.⁹ The whole question depends upon what Law was in practice in Israel when the book was written.

¹ ii. 1-9.² ii. 10-16.³ iii. 7-12.⁴ See above, pp. 196 f⁵ i. 2.⁶ ii. 10.⁷ ii. 17-iii. 12; iii. 22 f., Eng. iv. The above sentences are from W. R. Smith, art. 'Malachi,' *Encycl. Brit.*, 9th ed.⁸ Above, p. 324.⁹ 'Mal.' i. 8; Neh. v.

In 445 Ezra and Nehemiah, by covenant between the people and Yahweh, instituted the code which we know as the Priestly Code of the Pentateuch. Before that year the ritual and social life of the Jews appear to have been directed by the Deuteronomic Code. Now 'Malachi' enforces a practice with regard to the tithes which agrees more closely with the Priestly Code than with Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy commands that every third year the whole tithe is to be given to the Levites and the poor who reside *within the gates* of the giver, and is there to be eaten by them. 'Malachi' commands that the whole tithe be brought into the storehouse of the Temple for the Levites in service there; so does the Priestly Code.¹ On this ground many date the Book of 'Malachi' after 445.² But 'Malachi's' divergence from Deuteronomy on this point may be explained by there being in his time practically no Levites outside Jerusalem; and it is to be noticed that he joins the tithe with the *têrûmah* or heave-offering as Deuteronomy does.³ On other points of the Law he agrees rather with Deuteronomy than with the Priestly Code. He follows Deuteronomy in calling the priests *sons of Levi*,⁴ while the Priestly Code limits the priesthood to the sons of Aaron. He seems to quote Deuteronomy when forbidding the oblation of blind, lame and sick*beasts;⁵ appears to differ from the Priestly Code which allows the sacrificial beast to be male or female, when he assumes that it is a male;⁶ follows the

¹ Deut. xii. 11, xxvi. 12; 'Mal.' iii. 8, 10; Num. xviii. 21 ff. (P).

² Vatke (contemporaneous with Nehemiah), Schrader, Keil, Kuenen (perhaps in second governorship of Nehemiah, but see above, p. 327, for a decisive reason against this), Köhler, Driver, Von Orelli (between Nehemiah's first and second visit), Kirkpatrick, Robertson.

³ Deut. xii. 11. In P *têrûmah* is a due paid to priests as distinct from Levites.

⁴ ii. 4-8: cf. Deut. xxxiii. 8.

⁵ i. 8; Deut. xv. 21.

⁶ i. 14; Lev. iii. 1, 6.

expressions of Deuteronomy and not of the Priestly Code in detailing the sins of the people;¹ and uses the Deuteronomic phrases *the Law of Moses*, *My servant Moses*, *statutes and judgements*, and *Horeb* for the Mount of the Law.² For the rest, he echoes or implies only Ezekiel and that part of the Priestly Code³ which is regarded as earlier than the rest, probably from the first years of exile. Moreover, he describes the Torah as not yet fully codified.⁴ The priests still deliver it in a way improbable after 445. The trouble of the heathen marriages with which he deals (if indeed the verses on this subject be authentic and not a later intrusion⁵) was that which engaged Ezra's attention on his arrival in 458, but Ezra found that it had for some time been vexing the heads of the community. While, therefore, we are obliged to date the Book of 'Malachi' before 445 B.C., it is uncertain whether it preceded or followed Ezra's attempts at reform in 458. Most critics now think that it preceded them.⁶

The Book of 'Malachi' is an argument with the

¹ iii. 5; Deut. v. 11 ff., xviii. 10, xxiv. 17 ff.; Lev. xix. 31, 33 f.

² iii. 22 Heb., iv. 4 Eng. *Law of Moses* and *Moses My servant* are found only in the Deut. portions of the Hexateuch, the historical books, and here In P Sinai is the Mount of the Law. To the above may be added *segullah*, iii. 17, found in the Pentateuch only outside P and in Ps. cxxxv. 4. All these resemblances between 'Malachi' and Deut. and 'Malachi's' divergences from P are given in W. R. Smith, *O.T.J.C.*², 425 ff., cf. 444 ff.

³ Lev. xvii-xxvi. From this and Ezekiel he received the conception of the profanation of the sanctuary by the sins of the people—ii. 11: cf. also ii. 2, iii. 3, 4, for traces of Ezekiel's influence.

⁴ ii. 6 ff.

⁵ See below, pp. 332, 354 ff.

⁶ Herzfeld, Bleek, Stade, Kautzsch (probably), Wellhausen (*Gesch.*, p. 125), Nowack before the arrival of Ezra, Cornill either soon before or soon after 458, W. R. Smith either before or soon after 445. Hitzig at first put it before 458, but later after 358, as he took the overthrow of the Edomites described in ch. i. 2-5 to be due to a campaign in that year by Artaxerxes Ochus (cf. Euseb., *Chron.*, II, 221). Von Bulmerincq dates i. 2-5 about 485, and iii. 22-24 between 457 and 445 (p. 44).

prophet's contemporaries, not only with the wicked, who in forgetfulness of what Yahweh is corrupt the ritual, fail to give the Temple its dues, abuse justice, marry foreign wives,¹ divorce their own, and commit other sins ; but also with the pious, who, equally forgetful of God's character, are driven by the arrogance of the wicked to ask, whether He loves Israel, whether He is a God of Justice, and to murmur that it is vain to serve Him. To these two classes the prophet has the following answers. God does love Israel. He is worshipped everywhere among the heathen. He is the Father of all Israel. He will bless His people when they put away abuses and pay their dues ; and His Day of Judgement is coming, when the good shall be separated from the wicked. But before it come, Elijah the prophet will be sent to attempt the conversion of the wicked, or at least to call the nation to decide for Yahweh. This argument is pursued in seven or perhaps eight paragraphs, which do not show much consecutive-ness, but are addressed, some to the wicked, and some to the despairing adherents of Yahweh.

1. i. 2-5. To those who ask how God loves Israel, the proof of Yahweh's election of Israel is shown in the fall of the Edomites.

2. i. 6-14. Charge against the people of dishonouring their God, whom even the heathen reverence.

3. ii. 1-9. Charge against the priests, who have broken God's covenant with Levi, and debased their office by not reverencing Yahweh, misleading the people and perverting justice. A curse is fallen on them—they are contemptible.

4. ii. 10-16. A charge against the people for their treachery to each other ; instanced in the heathen marriages, if vv. 11 and 12 be authentic, and in their divorce of their wives.

5. ii. 17-iii. 5 or 6. Against those who amid evils grow sceptical about Yahweh. His Angel, or Himself, will come

¹ But see below, pp. 332, 354 ff.

first to purge the priesthood and ritual that there may be pure sacrifices, and *second* to rid the land of its criminals and sinners.

6. iii. 6 or 7-12. A charge against the people of neglecting tithes. Let these be paid, disasters shall cease and the land be blessed.

7. iii. 13-21 Heb., iii. 13-iv. 2 LXX and Eng.—Another charge against the pious who say it is vain to serve God. God will rise and separate between good and bad in His Day.

8. To this, iii. 22-24 Heb., iv. 3-5 Eng., adds a call to keep the Law, and a promise that Elijah will be sent to try to convert the people before the Day of the Lord comes with its curse.¹

The authenticity of no part of the Book has been in serious question. Böhme,² indeed, took the last three verses for a later addition, on account of their Deuteronomic character, but, as Kuenen points out, this is in agreement with other parts of the Book. Sufficient attention has not yet been paid to the question of the integrity of the text. The Septuagint offers a few emendations.³ There are other passages obviously or probably corrupt.⁴ The text of the title, as we have seen, is uncertain, and probably a later addition. W. R. Smith has called attention to ii. 16, where the Massoretic punctuation seems to have been determined with desire to support the Targum 'if thou hatest her put her away,' and so pervert into a permission to divorce a passage which forbids divorce almost as clearly as Christ did. But in truth the whole of this passage, ii. 10-16, is in such condition that we can hardly believe in its integrity. It opens with stating

¹ Von Bulmerincq (pp. 69-86) distinguishes seven independent addresses, six perfect, one imperfect: i. 2-5; i. 6-ii. 9; ii. 10-16; ii. 17-iii. 5; iii. 6-12; iii. 13-21; iii. 22-24.

² *Z.A.T.W.*, 1887, 210 ff.

³ i. 11, for *נְדָרִים* δεδόξασται; perhaps ii. 12, *עַר* for *עַר*; perhaps iii. 8 ff. for *קִבֵּעַ קִבֵּעַ*; 16, for *אֵן* ταῦτα.

⁴ i. 11 ff.; ii. 3, and perhaps 12, 15.

that God is the Father of all Israelites and the challenge why then are we faithless to each other? (ver. 10). But 11 and 12 do not give an instance of this: they describe the marriages with the heathen women of the land, which is not proof of faithlessness between Israelites. Such a proof is furnished only by 13-16, with their condemnation of those who divorce the wives of their youth. The verses, therefore, cannot lie in their proper order, and 13-16 ought to follow immediately upon 10. This raises the question of the authenticity of 11 and 12, against the heathen marriages. If they bear such marks of having been intruded into their position, we can understand such an intrusion in subsequent days, when the question of the heathen marriages came to the front with Ezra and Nehemiah. Besides, 11, 12 lack the characteristic mark of other oracles of the Book: they do not state a general charge against the people, and then introduce the people's question as to the particulars of the charge. On the whole, these verses are suspicious. If not a later intrusion, they are out of place where they lie. The peculiar remark in 13, *and this secondly ye do*, must have been added by the editor to whom we owe the present arrangement.

CHAPTER XXV

FROM ZECHARIAH TO 'MALACHI'

BETWEEN the completion of the Temple in 516 and the arrival of Ezra in 458, we have almost no record of the little colony round Mount Sion. The Jewish chronicles devote to the period but a few verses of unsupported tradition.¹ After 517 we have nothing from Zechariah; and if any other prophet appeared during the next half-century, his words have not survived. We are left to infer what was the true condition of affairs, not less from this ominous silence than from hints which are given in the writings of 'Malachi,' Ezra and Nehemiah when the period was over. Beyond a partial attempt to rebuild the walls of the city in the reign of Artaxerxes I,² there seems to have been nothing to record. It was a period of disillusion, disheartening and decay. The completion of the Temple did not bring in the Messianic era. Zerubabel, whom Haggai and Zechariah had crowned as Prince of Israel, died without reaching higher rank than a minor satrapy in the Persian Empire, and even in

¹ Ezra iv. 6-23.

² Recorded in the Aramean document in our Book of Ezra, and there is no reason to doubt it. There we have found, in spite of its comparatively late date, much accurate history. See pp. 211 f. The Temple being finished, the Jews must have drawn upon them the same Samaritan envy which had delayed its construction. To meet it, what more natural than that the Jews should attempt to raise the walls of their city?

that he appears to have been succeeded by a Persian official.¹ The re-migrations from Babylon and elsewhere, which Zechariah predicted, did not take place. The small population of Jerusalem were still harassed by the hostility, and their morale sapped by the insidiousness, of the Samaritans: they were denied the stimulus, the purgation, the glory of a great persecution. Their Persian tyrants mostly left them alone. The world left them alone. Nothing stirred in Palestine except Samaritan intrigues. History rolled westward, and destiny seemed to be settling on the Greeks. In 490 Miltiades defeated the Persians at Marathon. In 480 Thermopylæ was fought and the Persian fleet broken at Salamis. In 479 a Persian army was destroyed at Plataea, and Xerxes lost Europe and most of Ionia. In 460 Athens sent an expedition to assist the Egyptian revolt from Persia, and in 457 'her slain fell in Cyprus, in Egypt, in Phœnicia, at Haliæ, in Ægina, and in Megara in the same year.'

Thus left to themselves and to the petty hostilities of their neighbours, the Jews appear to have sunk into a careless and sordid life. They entered the period, it is true, with some sense of their distinction.² In exile they had suffered God's anger,³ and been purged by it. But out of discipline often springs pride—no subtler temptation of the human heart! The returned Israel felt this to the quick, and it unfitted them for encountering the disappointment and hardship which followed on the completion of the Temple. The tide of hope, which rose to flood with that consummation, ebbed rapidly and left God's people struggling, like

¹ See above, p. 327, and below, pp. 345, 348 on 'Mal.' i. 8.

² Cf. Stade, *Gesch. des Volkes Israel*, II, pp. 128-138, the best account of this period.

³ 'Mal.' iii. 14.

an ordinary tribe of peasants, with bad seasons and envious neighbours. Their pride was on edge, and they fell, not as at other times of disappointment into despair, but into bitter carelessness and contempt of their duty to God. This was a curious temper, and, so far as we know, new in Israel. It led them to despise both His love and His holiness.¹ They neglected their Temple dues, and impudently presented to their God polluted bread and blemished beasts which they would not have dared to offer to their Persian governor.² The priesthood lost not reverence only, but decency and all conscience of their office.³ They *despised the Table of the Lord*, ceased to instruct the people and grew partial in judgement. As a consequence they became contemptible in the eyes of the community. Immorality prevailed: *every man dealt treacherously with his brother*.⁴ Adultery, perjury, fraud and the oppression of the poor were rife.

One fashion, in which the people's wounded pride spited itself, was the custom of marriage which even the best families contracted with half-heathen *people of the land*. Across Judah were scattered the descendants of Jews whom Nebuchadrezzar had not deemed worth removing to Babylon. Whether regarded from a social or religious point of view, their fathers had been the dregs of the old community. Their own religion, cut off as they were from the main body of Israel and scattered among the old heathen shrines of the land, must have further deteriorated; but they had probably secured for themselves the best portions of the vacant soil, and enjoyed a comfort and stability of welfare beyond that yet attainable by the majority of the returned exiles. More numerous than these

¹ 'Mal.' i. 2, 6; iii. 8 f.

² *Id.* i. 6 f., ii.

³ *Id.* i. 7 f., 12-14.

⁴ *Id.* ii. 10.

dregs of ancient Jewry were the mixed race of Samaritans. They possessed a rich land, which they had cultivated long enough for many of their families to be settled in comparative wealth. With these half-pagan Jews and Samaritans, the families of the true Israel, as they regarded themselves, did not hesitate to form alliances, for in the precarious position of the colony, such alliances were a sure way to wealth and political influence. How much the Jews were mastered by their desire for them is seen from the fact that, when the relatives of their half-heathen brides made it a condition of the marriages that they should first put away their old wives, they did so. Divorce became frequent, and suffering was inflicted on the native Jewish women.¹

So the religious condition of Israel declined for nearly two generations, and then about 460 the Word of God broke once more through a prophet's lips.

We call this prophet 'Malachi,' following the error of an editor of his book, who, finding it nameless, inferred or invented that name from its description of the priest as the 'Mal'ach,' or *messenger, of the Lord*.² But the prophet gave himself no name. Writing from the midst of a poor, persecuted group, and attacking the authorities both of church and state, he preferred to publish his charge anonymously. His name was in *the Lord's book of remembrance*.³

The unknown prophet addressed himself both to the sinners of his people and to those querulous adherents of Yahweh whom the success of the sinners had tempted to despair in their service of God. His style shares the practical directness of his predecessors among the returned exiles. He takes up one point after another,

¹ 'Mal.' ii. 10-16.

² For proof of this see above, pp. 323 ff.
³ 'Mal.' iii. 16.

and drives it home in plain lines or paragraphs. But it is sixty years since Haggai and Zechariah, and in the circumstances described, a prophet could no longer come forward as an inspirer of his nation. Prophecy seems to have been driven from public life, from the sudden enforcement of truth in the face of the people to the more deliberate and ordered argument which marks the teacher who works in private. In the Book of 'Malachi' there are many of the principles and some of the enthusiasm of the ancient Hebrew seer. But the discourse is broken into formal periods, each upon the same academic model. First a truth is pronounced, or a charge made against the people; then with the words *but ye will say* the prophet states some objection of his hearers, proceeds to answer it by detailed evidence, and then drives home his truth, or his charge, in genuine prophetic fashion. To the student of prophecy this peculiarity of the Book is of interest, for it is no mere personal idiosyncrasy. We rather feel that prophecy is assuming the temper of the teacher. The method is the commencement of that which later becomes the prevailing habit in Jewish literature. Just as with Zephaniah we saw prophecy passing into Apocalypse, and with Habakkuk into the speculation of the schools of Wisdom, so now in 'Malachi' we perceive it tending towards the scholasticism of the Rabbis.

But the interest of this change must not prevent us from appreciating the genuine prophetic spirit of our book. Far more fully than, for instance, that of Haggai, to the style of which its practical simplicity is akin, it enumerates the prophetic principles: the everlasting Love of Yahweh for Israel, His Fatherhood and His Holiness, His ancient Ideals for Priesthood and People, the need of a Repentance proved by deeds,

the consequent Promise of Prosperity, the Day of the Lord, and Judgement between the evil and the righteous. Upon this last the Book affords a proof of the delinquency of the people during the last half-century, and in connection the prophet introduces novel features. To Haggai and Zechariah the great Tribulation had closed with the Exile and the rebuilding of the Temple : Israel stood on the margin of the Messianic age. But 'Malachi' proclaims the need of another judgement as emphatically as the older prophets predicted the Babylonian doom. He repeats their name for it, *the great and terrible Day of Yahweh*. But he does not foresee it, as they did, in the shape of a historical process. His description is pure Apocalypse—*the fire of the smelter and the fuller's acid : the day that burns like a furnace*, when all wickedness is stubble, and evil men are devoured, but to the righteous *the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings*, and they shall tread the wicked under foot.¹ To this the prophet adds a new promise. God is so much the God of love,² that before the Day He will give His people a chance of conversion. He will send Elijah the prophet to change their hearts, that He may be prevented from striking the land with His ban.

On one other point the book is original : its attitude towards the heathen. Among the heathen, it boldly says, Yahweh is held in higher reverence than among His own people.³ In such a statement we can hardly fail to feel the influence on Israel of their contact, often close and personal, with their wise and mild tyrants the Persians. We may emphasise the verse as the first note of that recognition of the religiousness of the

¹ iii; 2, 19 ff. Heb., iv. 1 ff. Eng.

² iii. 6.

³ i. 11.

Gentiles, which we find swelling towards fullness in the Book of Jonah.

Such are in brief the style and the principles of the Book of 'Malachi,'¹ whose separate prophecies we now proceed to take up in detail.

¹ See further, von Bulmerincq, *Kap. vi.*

CHAPTER XXVI

PROPHECY WITHIN THE LAW

‘MALACHI’ I-IV

BENEATH this title we may gather all eight sections of the Book. They contain things of perennial interest and validity: their truth is applicable, their music still musical, to ourselves. But their chief significance is historical. They illustrate the development of prophecy *within* the Law. Not *under* the Law. For if one thing be more clear than another about ‘Malachi’s’ teaching, it is that the spirit of prophecy is not yet crushed by the legalism which finally killed it. He observes and enforces the demands of the Deuteronomic law by which his people had lived since the Return from Exile. But he traces each of these to a spiritual principle, to some essential in the character of Israel’s God, which is either doubted or neglected by his contemporaries in their lax performance of the Law. That is why we entitle his book Prophecy within the Law.

The principles of the religion of Israel which had been shaken or obscured by the delinquency of the people during the half-century after the rebuilding of the Temple were three—the distinctive Love of Yahweh for His people, His Holiness, and His Righteousness. ‘Malachi’ takes each of these in turn, and proves or

enforces it according as the people have doubted it or in their carelessness done it despite.

I. GOD'S LOVE FOR ISRAEL AND HATRED OF EDM
(Chap. i. 2-5)

He begins with God's Love, and in answer to the disappointed ¹ people's cry, *Wherein hast Thou loved us?* he does not, as older prophets did, sweep the history of Israel, and gather proofs of Yahweh's grace and guidance in all the great events from the deliverance from Egypt to the deliverance from Babylon. He confines himself to a comparison of Israel with the Gentile nation, most akin to Israel according to the flesh, their brother Edom. It is possible to see in this a proof of our prophet's narrowness, as contrasted with Amos or Hosea or the Evangelist of the Exile. But we must remember that out of all the history of Israel 'Malachi' could not have chosen an instance which would more strongly appeal to his contemporaries. We have seen from the Book of Obadiah how since the beginning of the Exile Edom had come to be regarded by Israel as their great antithesis.² If we needed further proof we should find it in Psalms of the Exile, which like the Book of Obadiah remember bitterly the part that Edom played in the day of Israel's calamity. The two were utterly opposed in genius and character. Edom was a people of as unspiritual and self-sufficient a temper as ever cursed any of God's creatures. Like their ancestor they were *profane*,³ without repentance, humility or ideals. Apart from the long history of war between the two peoples, it was a true instinct

¹ See above, p. 334.

² See above, Ch. XIV, on 'Edom and Israel.'

³ Heb. xii. 16.

which led Israel to regard their brother as representative of that heathendom against which they had to realise their destiny in the world as God's own nation. In choosing the contrast of Edom's fate to illustrate Yahweh's love for Israel, 'Malachi' was not only choosing what would appeal to his contemporaries, but what is the most striking and constant antithesis in the history of Israel: the diverse genius and destiny of these two Semitic nations who were nearest neighbours and, according to their traditions, twin-brethren after the flesh. If we keep this in mind we shall understand Paul's use of the antithesis in the passage in which he clenches it by a quotation from 'Malachi': *as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated*.¹ In these words the doctrine of the Divine election appears to be expressed as absolutely as possible. But it would be unfair to read the passage except in the light of Israel's history. In the Old Testament it is a matter of fact that the doctrine of the Divine preference of Israel to Esau appeared only after the respective characters of the nations were manifested in history, and that it grew more defined only as history discovered more of the fundamental contrast between the two in genius and destiny.² In the Old Testament, therefore, the doctrine is the result, not of arbitrary belief in God's bare fiat, but of historical experience; although, of course, the distinction which experience proves is traced back, with everything else of good or evil that happens, to the sovereign will of God. Nor let us forget that the Old Testament doctrine of election is of election to service only. That

¹ Romans ix. 13. The citation is from the LXX: τὸν Ἰακώβ ἠγάπησα, τὸν δὲ Ἑσάυ ἐμίσησα.

² This mainly after the beginning of exile. Shortly before Deut. **xxiii.** 7 says: *Thou shall not abhor an Edomite, for he is thy brother.*

is to say, the Divine intention in electing covers not the elect individual or nation only, but the world and its need of God and His truth.

The event to which 'Malachi' appeals as evidence for God's rejection of Edom is *the desolation of the latter's ancient heritage, and the abandonment of it to jackals of the desert*. Scholars used to think that these vague phrases referred to some act of the Persian kings: some removal of the Edomites from the lands of the Jews in order to make room for the returned exiles.¹ But 'Malachi' says that it was Edom's own *heritage* which was laid desolate. This can only be Mount Esau or Se'ir, and the statement that it was delivered *to jackals of the desert* proves that the reference is to that expulsion of Edom by the Nabatean Arabs which we have seen the Book of Obadiah relate.²

But it is time to give the opening passage of 'Malachi,' in which he appeals to this event as proof of God's distinctive love for Israel, and adds, of His power beyond Israel (i. 2-5).

i. 2-5. *I have loved you, saith Yahweh. But ye say, Wherein hast Thou loved us? Is not Esau brother to Jacob?—Rede of Yahweh—and I have loved Jacob and Esau have I hated. I have made his mountains desolate, and given his heritage to the jackals of the desert. Should Edom say,³ We are destroyed, but we will rebuild the waste places, thus saith Yahweh of Hosts, They may build,*

¹ So even in 1888, Stade, *Gesch. des Volkes Israel*, II, p. 112.

² See above, p. 168. This interpretation is there said to be Wellhausen's; but Cheyne, in a note to the *Z.A.T.W.*, 1894, p. 142, points out that Grätz, in 'Die Anfänge der Nabatäer-Herrschaft' in the *Monatschrift für Wissenschaft u. Geschichte des Judenthums*, 1875, pp. 60-66, had already explained 'Mal.' i. 1-5 as describing the conquest of Edom by the Nabateans. This is adopted by Buhl, *Gesch. der Edomiter*, p. 79.

³ The feminine verb indicates that the people of Edom is meant.

but I will pull down : men shall call them The Border of Wickedness and The People with whom Yahweh is wroth for ever. And your eyes shall see it, and yourselves shall say, Great is Yahweh beyond Israel's border.

2. 'HONOUR THY FATHER' (Chap. i. 6-14)

From God's Love, which Israel have doubted, the prophet passes to His Majesty or Holiness, which they have wronged. Now it is remarkable that the relation of God to the Jews in which the prophet should see His Majesty illustrated is not only His lordship over them but His Fatherhood: *A son honours a father, and a servant his lord ; but if I be Father, where is My honour ? and if I be Lord, where is reverence for Me ? saith Yahweh of Hosts* (i. 6). We are so accustomed to associate with the Divine Fatherhood only ideas of love and pity that the use of the relation to illustrate not Love but Majesty, and the setting of it in parallel to the Divine Kingship, may seem strange. Yet this was natural to Israel. In the Semitic world, even to the human parent, honour was due before love. *Honour thy father and thy mother*, said the Fifth Commandment ; and when, after long shyness to do so, Israel ventured to claim Yahweh as Father of His people, it was at first with the view rather of increasing their sense of His authority and their duty of reverencing Him, than of bringing Him near their hearts and assuring them of His tenderness. The latter elements were not absent from the conception. But even in the Psalter, in which we find the most tender fellowship of the believer with God, there is only one passage in which His love for His own is compared to the love of a human father.¹ And in the few other passages where He is

¹ Ps. ciii. 13. In Ps. lxxiii. 15 believers are called *His children* ; elsewhere sonship is claimed for the king—ii. 7, lxxxix. 27 f.

revealed or appealed to as Father of the nation, it is, with two exceptions,¹ in order either to emphasise His creation of Israel or His discipline. So in Jeremiah² and in an anonymous prophet of the same period perhaps as 'Malachi.'³ This hesitation to call God Father, and this severe conception of what Fatherhood meant, was needful for Israel in face of the sensuous ideas of the Divine Fatherhood cherished by their neighbours.⁴ But, however this may be, the infrequency and austerity of Israel's conception of God's Fatherhood, in contrast with that of Christianity, enables us to understand why 'Malachi' should employ the relation as proof, not of the Love, but of the Majesty and Holiness of God.

This Majesty and Holiness have been wronged, he says, by low thoughts of God's altar, and by offering upon it, with easy conscience, cheap and blemished sacrifices. The people would be ashamed to present such to their Persian governor: how can God be pleased with them? Better sacrifice should cease than that such offerings should be presented in such a spirit! *Is there no one*, cries the prophet, *to close the doors of the Temple, so that the altar smoke not in vain?*

The passage shows what a change has passed over the spirit of Israel since prophecy first attacked the sacrificial ritual. Amos would have swept it all away as an abomination to God.⁵ So Isaiah and Jeremiah.

¹ Hosea xi. 1 ff. (though even here the idea of discipline is present) and Isa. lxiii. 16.

² iii. 4.

³ Isa. lxiv. 8, cf. Deut. xxxii. 11, where the discipline of Israel by Yahweh, shaking them out of their desert circumstance and tempting them to their career in Palestine, is likened to the father-eagle's training of his new-fledged brood to fly: A.V. mother-eagle.

⁴ Cf. Cheyne, *Origin of the Psalter*, p. 305, n. O.

⁵ Vol. I, Ch. IX.

But their reason for this was different from 'Malachi's.' Their contemporaries were assiduous and lavish in sacrificing, and devoted to Temple and ritual with a fanaticism which made them forget that God's demands upon His people were righteousness and the service of the weak. But 'Malachi' condemns his generation for depreciating the Temple, and being stingy and fraudulent in their offerings. The post-exilic prophet assumes a different attitude to the ritual from that of his predecessors in ancient Israel. They wished it abolished, and placed the chief duties of Israel towards God in justice and mercy. But he emphasises the ritual as the duty of the people towards God, and sees in their neglect of it the reason of their misfortunes and the cause of their coming doom. In this change which has come over prophecy we must admit the growing influence of the Law. From Ezekiel onwards the prophets become more legal. And though at first they do not become less ethical, yet the influence upon them was such as was bound in time to engross their interest, and to remit the ethical elements of their religion to a place secondary to the ceremonial. We see symptoms of this even in 'Malachi,' we shall find more in Joel, and we know how aggravated these symptoms became later in all the leaders of Jewish religion. But we must remember that this change of emphasis was largely required by the change of temper in the people to whom the prophets ministered. 'Malachi' found in his contemporaries a habit of religious performance not only slovenly and indecent, but fraudulent, and it became his practical duty to attack this. Moreover, the neglect of the Temple was not due to those spiritual conceptions of God and those moral duties He demanded, in the interests of which the older prophets had condemned the ritual. The neglect of the Temple

was due to the same reasons as the superstitious zeal in sacrificing which the older prophets had attacked—false ideas of God Himself, and of what was due to Him. On these grounds, therefore, we may say that ‘Malachi’ was performing for his generation as needful a work as Amos and Isaiah performed for theirs. Only, be it admitted, the direction of ‘Malachi’s’ emphasis was more dangerous for religion than the emphasis of Amos or Isaiah. How liable the practice he inculcated was to exaggeration and abuse is proved in the later history of his people: it was against that exaggeration, grown obdurate through three centuries, that Jesus delivered His unsparing words.

Whether the piece was originally in regular metre is uncertain. Some lines are clearly metrical and fall into regular quatrains, but the rest can be made so only by such drastic elimination of words and clauses as Sievers proposed. Few followed him and some of these have withdrawn their adherence; the most critics while recognising the presence of metrical lines leave open the question of the original form.¹ In our uncertainty it will be best to render the piece exactly as it stands, pointing out that while some of it cannot be reduced to metre, and in particular the frequent *sayeth Yahweh of Hosts* may partly or altogether be a later addition, the whole piece fulfils the first law of Hebrew verse, parallelism, and much of it bears other proofs of poetic diction: ellipses, absence of particles and the article, and unusual syntax.²

¹ See especially Sievers (*Metrische Studien*), Nowack, Marti, Duhm, *in loco*, and von Bulmerincq (pp. 419 ff.).

² See above, pp. 67 and 88.

- i. 6. *A son he honours a father,
And a servant his lord,
But if Father I be
Where is My honour ?
And if Lord I be
Where is My reverence ?
Sayeth Yahweh of Hosts to you,
O priests who despise My Name.
But ye say in what despise we Thy Name ?*
7. *By bringing up to Mine Altar
Food that's polluted.
But ye say how do we pollute it ?¹
By your saying² the Table of Yahweh—
That may be despised !*
8. *And when ye bring near a blind one
To slay, It is no harm !³
Or when you bring near a lame one,
Or a sickly, No harm !

Bring it, I pray, to thy governor,
Will he be pleased with it ?⁴
Or will he accept thy person ?
Sayeth Yahweh of Hosts.*
9. *But now, pray, can you pacify⁵
God that He may pity us ?
When from your hands is such stuff,
Can He accept your persons ?
[Sayeth Yahweh of Hosts].⁶*

¹ LXX; Heb. *Thee*, as if *did we use polluted things in regard to Thee ?*—similar construction in Zech. vii. 5, צַמְחוֹנִי.

² Obviously *in their hearts* = *thinking*.

³ LXX, *is there no harm ?*

⁴ So LXX; Heb. *with thee*.

⁵ Lit. as in Zechariah, *smooth the face*. Here a question better suits next couplet than a command.

⁶ When as here these words add a line to the preceding quatrain . they may reasonably be taken as a later addition.

10. *Who even of you will close the doors,
That ye light not Mine Altar in vain ?
No pleasure have I among you,
I favour no gift from your hands.*
11. *For from the sunrise on to his setting,
By the nations My Name is honoured,¹
And in every Place² incense is offered,
³ An offering pure to My Name,
For great is My Name with the Nations.*
12. *But it ye profane when ye think,⁴
Table of the Lord—it is defiled,
And ⁵ its food is contemptible.
Sayeth Yahweh of Hosts.*
13. *Yea ye say, Lo, what a weariness,
And at it ye sniff—⁶
[Sayeth Yahweh of Hosts].
And ye bring what is stolen,⁷
And the lame and the sickly.*

¹ So LXX; Heb. *My Name is great*, probably, by mistake of a scribe's eye, from the same further on. The LXX reading was hardly possible unless found in the original.

² מִקְוֶה in the sense it has in Arabic, *sacred place*; Zeph. ii. 11, above, p. 63, n. 6.

³ With Wellhausen and others delete Heb. *and*.

⁴ Heb. *say*, that is *in your hearts*.

⁵ Heb. adds נִיבֵן, else only in Keri of Isa. lvii. 19. W. R. Smith (*O.T./C.*², p. 444) is probably right in taking it as an error for נְבוּזָה which kept its place after the correction was inserted.

⁶ Wellhausen omits as obscure and awkward before what follows.

⁷ גִּזְזוּלִי, Wellhausen emends אֶת־הָעוֹר, taking the first three letters from preceding word; LXX, ἀρπάγματα.

- i. 13. *When ye bring such an offering,
Shall I from your hand accept it ?
Sayeth Yahweh of Hosts.*¹
14. *Cursed be the cheat in whose flock is a male ;
And he vows it ² and slays for the Lord a wastrel,³
For a great King am I, saith Yahweh of Hosts,
And My Name is feared by the nations.*

Before we pass from this passage we notice one remarkable feature—perhaps the most original contribution which ‘Malachi’ makes to prophecy. In contrast to the irreverence of Israel and the wrong they do to God’s Holiness, He Himself asserts that not only is *His Name great and glorified among the heathen, from the rising to the setting of the sun*, but that *in every sacred place incense, a pure offering, is offered to His Name*. This is so novel that the attempt has been made to interpret it, not of the prophet’s day, but of the Messianic age and the kingdom of Christ. So, many Christian Fathers, from Justin and Irenæus to Theodoret and Augustine ;⁴ so, our own Version, which throws the verbs into the future ; and so, moderns like Pusey, who declares that the style is ‘a vivid present such as is often used to describe the future ; the things spoken of show it to be future.’ These take the passage to anticipate Christ’s parables on the rejection of the Jews and ingathering of the Gentiles, and the argument of the Epistle to the Hebrews, that the bleeding and defective offerings of the Jews were abrogated by the Cross. But such exegesis is only possible by perverting the text and misreading the argument. Not only are the verbs in the present—so

¹ So LXX ; Heb. omits *of Hosts*.

² Cf. Lev. iii. 1, 6.

³ So LXX ; Heb. omits *it*.

⁴ Quoted by Pusey, *in loco*

also in early versions—but the prophet is obviously contrasting the contempt of God's people for Himself and His institutions with the reverence paid to His Name among the heathen. It is not the question of there being righteous people in every nation, well-pleasing to God because of their lives. The very offerings of the heathen are acceptable to Him. Never have we had in prophecy a statement so generous. Why it should appear only now in prophecy is a question we are unable to answer. Many have seen in it the result of Israel's intercourse with their religious and tolerant masters the Persians. No Persian king up to this time persecuted the Jews, and pious and large-minded Israelites must have become acquainted with the pure doctrines of the Persian religion, among which, it is said, was already numbered the recognition of piety in men of all religions.¹ If Paul derived from Greek culture the knowledge which made it possible for him to speak in Athens of the religiousness of the Gentiles, it was as possible that Jews who had come within the experience of a purer Aryan faith should utter a more emphatic acknowledgment that the One God had those who served Him in spirit and in truth all over the world. But, whatever foreign influences may have ripened such a faith in Israel, we must not forget that its roots were struck in the native soil of their religion. From the first they had known their God as of a grace so infinite that it was impossible it should be exhausted on themselves. If His righteousness, as Amos showed, was over the Syrian states, and His pity and His power to convert, as Isaiah showed, covered the cities of Phœnicia, the Evangelist of the Exile could declare that He quenched not the smoking wicks of the dim heathen faiths.

¹ Cheyne, *Origin of the Psalter*, pp. 292 and 305 f.

As interesting as the origin of 'Malachi's' attitude to the heathen, are two other points. In the first place, it is remarkable that this feeling, especially in the form of emphasising the purity of heathen offerings, should appear in a book which lays stress on the Jewish Temple and ritual. This is a warning not to judge harshly the so-called legal age of Jewish religion, nor to despise the prophets who have come under the influence of the Law. And in the second place, we perceive a step towards the fuller acknowledgment of Gentile religiousness which we find in the Book of Jonah. None of the post-exilic Psalms strike the same note. They predict the conversion of the heathen; but they do not recognise their native reverence and piety. Perhaps the reason is that in a Psalter, collected for the national service, such a feature would be out of place.

3. THE PRIESTHOOD OF KNOWLEDGE (Chap. ii. 1-9)

In the third section of his book 'Malachi' addresses the priests. He charges them not only with irreverence and slovenliness in their discharge of the Temple service—for this he appears to intend by the phrase *filth of your feasts*—but with neglect of their intellectual duties. *The lips of a priest guard knowledge, and men seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the Angel—the revealing Angel—of Yahweh of Hosts.* What a remarkable saying from the legal age of Israel's religion, and from a writer who emphasises the ceremonial law! In all prophecy there is none more in harmony with the prophetic ideal. How needed in our age!—against those two extremes from which we suffer, the limitation of the ideal of priesthood to the communication of a magic grace, and its evaporation in a vague religiosity from which reason is excluded as if perilous,

worldly and devilish.¹ 'Surrender of the intellect,' indeed! This is to bury the talent in the napkin, and still preached and practised by the men of one talent. Religion needs all the brains we mortals can put into it. There is a priesthood of knowledge, a priesthood of the intellect, says 'Malachi,' and he makes this part of God's covenant with Levi. Every priest of God is a priest of truth; and it is largely by the Christian ministry's neglect of their intellectual duties that much irreligion prevails. As in 'Malachi's' day, so now, 'the laity take hurt and hindrance by our negligence.'² And as he points out, so with ourselves, the consequence is the indifference with which the Christian ministry is regarded by thoughtful portions of our labouring and professional classes. Were the ministers of the Churches to awake to their ideal there would come a revival of religion among us.

ii. 1. *Now for you is this charge, O priests,*

2. *If hearken ye will not,*

If ye lay not to heart,

To My Name to give glory,

[Sayeth Yahweh of Hosts],³

I will send upon you the Curse

And make a curse of your blessing,⁴

Yea I have cursed it already,⁵

For ye will not lay to heart.

¹ *Isaiah i-xxxix*, pp. 190 ff.

² See admirable remarks in Canon Wilson's *Essays and Addresses*, No. III. 'The Need of giving Higher Biblical Teaching and Instruction on the Fundamental Questions of Religion and Christianity.' London: 1887.

³ This breaks the quatrains, probably a gloss.

⁴ So LXX, sing, not benediction but prosperity or peculiar standing before God. Heb. *blessings*.

⁵ Doubtful, the LXX addition here is redundant if not mere dittography.

- ii. 3. *Behold I hew off you the arm¹
And scatter filth on your faces,
The filth of your own festal offerings,²
And dispatch you away from Myself,³*
4. *Then shall ye know that I sent you
This very charge,
To keep alive⁴ My covenant with Levi,
Sayeth Yahweh of Hosts.*
5. *My covenant with him was life
And peace, and I gave them to him,
Reverence and he revered Me,
And he bowed himself to my Name.⁵*
6. *The teaching of truth was in his mouth,
And wrong was not found on his lips,
Whole-hearted,⁶ straightforward he walked with Me,
And many he turned from iniquity.*

¹ Heb. הִנְנִי נֹעַר לָכֶם אֶת־הַזֶּרַע, *Lo, I rebuke you the seed.*
LXX, *Lo, I separate from you the arm or shoulder*, reading זֶרַע for נֹרַע
and perhaps נֹרַע for נֹעַר, both of which Wellhausen adopts, Ewald
the former. Is this the arm of the priest raised in blessing or his power?
Orelli reads *seed* = *posterity*, the whole *seed* of the priests. The next
clause tempts one to suppose that אֶת־הַזֶּרַע contains the verb of this, as
if scattering something.

² Lit. *feasts*, but apparently the rubbish they offered at these.

³ Heb. וְנָשָׂא אֶתְכֶם אֵלָיו, *and one shall bear you to it*: but
read וְנִשְׂאֶתְכֶם מֵאֵלָי.

⁴ For Heb. לְחַיִּיתָ read לְחַיִּוֹת, cf. Hab. iii. 2.

⁵ Num. xxv. 12.

⁶ Heb. בְּשָׁלוֹם, *in peace*, but here rather *in wholeness*.

7 ¹ *For the lips of a priest guard knowledge,
And men from his mouth seek instruction,
For he is the Angel of Yahweh of Hosts.*

8. *But ye turned off from the way.
And made many trip by your Torah,
Ye have ruined the covenant of Levi,
Sayeth Yahweh of Hosts.*

9. *So I on My part have set you
Contemned and despised of all people,
In so far as ye kept not My ways
But were partial ² in giving your Torah.*

4. THE CRUELTY OF DIVORCE (ii. 10-16)

In his fourth section, upon his countrymen's frequent divorce of their native wives in order to marry into the influential families of their half-heathen neighbours, 'Malachi' makes another of those wide and spiritual utterances which distinguish his prophecy and redeem his age from the charge of legalism. To him the Fatherhood of God is not merely a relation of power and authority, requiring reverence from the nation. It constitutes the members of the nation one brotherhood, and against this divorce is a crime and unnatural cruelty. Yahweh makes the *wife of a man's youth his mate for life and his wife by covenant*. He *hates divorce*, and His altar is so wetted by the tears of wronged women in Israel that the gifts upon it are not acceptable. No higher word on marriage was spoken except by

¹ Böhme, Marti, etc., take this verse as later.

² Lit. *respected persons*, מַכְבָּדִים; Torrey and Marti read פְּנִי and take the line as covered by the negative in the previous one: *and respected not My person*.

Christ. It breathes the spirit of our Lord's utterance, if we were sure of the text of ver. 15, we might say that it anticipated the letter. Verses 11-13a, which disturb the argument by bringing in the marriages with heathen wives are omitted in the following translation, and will be given separately.

ii. 10. *Is there not to us all One Father ?*

Did not One God create us ?

Why then betray we each other,

Profaning our fathers' covenant ?¹

13b. *Ye cover with tears the altar of Yahweh,*

With weeping and groaning,

Because He no longer regards the oblation

Nor favours a gift from your hand.

14. *Ye say why ? Because Yahweh was witness*

Between thee and the wife of thy youth,

With whom thou hast broken faith—

And she thy mate² and thy wife by covenant.

15. *Not even one would have done it,*

Who had any spirit left in him.³

¹ Here occur the two verses and a clause (11-13a) upon the foreign marriages, which seem to be an intrusion.

² See Vol. I, p. 277.

³ Lit. : *And not one did, and a remnant of spirit was his ;* which (1) A.V. renders : *And did not he make one ? Yet he had the residue of the spirit*, which Pusey accepts and applies to Adam and Eve, interpreting the second clause as *the breath of life*, by which Adam became a living soul (Gen. ii. 7). In Gen. i. 27 Adam and Eve are called one. In that case the meaning would be that the law of marriage was prior to that of divorce, as in the words of our Lord, Matt. xix. 4-6. (2) The Heb. might be rendered, *Not one has done this who had spirit left in him* (Hitzig, Orelli and above). In that case the following clauses of the verse are referred to Abraham. '*But what about the One ?*' (LXX

[*But what of the one who was seeking
A seed of God (?) ?*]
So take ye heed to your spirit,
And the wife of his¹ youth let none betray.

16. *For divorce I abhor,
Saith Yahweh, Israel's God,
And to cover one's clothing² with cruelty,³
So take heed to your spirit and do not betray.*

The verses omitted above treat of the foreign marriages, which led to this frequent divorce by the Jews of their native wives. So far they are relevant to the subject; but they disturb its argument, as already pointed out.⁴ They have nothing to do with the principle from which it starts that Yahweh is Father of all Israel. Remove them and the awkward clause in 13a, by which an editor has tried to connect them with the rest of the section, and the latter runs smoothly. The motive of their addition is apparent, if not justifiable. Here they are:—

insert *ye say* after *But*)—the one who put away his wife. Answer: *He was seeking a Divine seed.* The objection to this is that Abraham did not cast off the wife of his youth, Sarah, but the foreign Hagar. (3) Ewald: *And has not One created them, and all the Spirit* (cf. Zeph. i. 4) *is His? And what doth the One seek? A Divine seed.* So Reinke, and similarly Kirkpatrick (*Doct. of the Proph.*, p. 502) *And did not One make [you both]? And why [did] the One [do so]? Seeking a goodly seed.* (4) Wellhausen, going further on the same line, and reading הָלַא for וְלֹא, and וְיִשְׂרָאֵל for וְיִשְׂרָאֵל, and לָנוּ for לָךְ, renders: *Hath not the same God created and sustained your (? our) breath? And what does He desire? A seed of God.*

¹ So Syr.; Heb. *thy youth*.

² See Gesenius and Ewald for Arab. analogies for *clothing* = *wife*.

³ Heb. *saith Yahweh of Hosts* clearly an addition superfluous after the second line of the quatrain.

⁴ See above, p. 356.

ii. 11-12. *Judah was faithless, and abomination was practised in Israel¹ and in Jerusalem, for Judah defiled the sanctuary of Yahweh, which was dear to Him, and married the daughter of a strange god. May Yahweh cut off from the man, who does this, witness and champion² from the tents of Jacob, and offerer of sacrifices to Yahweh of Hosts.³*

5. 'WHERE IS THE GOD OF JUDGEMENT?'

(ii. 17-iii. 5)

In this section 'Malachi' turns from the sinners of his people to those who weary God with the complaint that sin is successful, or, as they put it, *Every one that does evil is good in the eyes of Yahweh, and He delighteth in them*; and again, *Where is the God of Judgement?* The answer is, The Lord Himself shall come. His Angel shall prepare His way before Him, and suddenly shall He come to His Temple. His coming shall be for judgement, terrible and searching. Its first object (note the order) shall be the cleansing of the priesthood, that proper sacrifices be established, its second the purging of the immorality of the people. Mark that although the coming of the Angel is said to precede that of God, there is the same blending of the two as we have seen in previous accounts of angels.⁴ It is uncertain whether this section closes with ver. 5 or 6: the latter goes equally well with it and with the following section.

¹ Wellhausen, etc., omit.

² Heb. *עֵד וְעֹנֶה*, *caller and answerer*; LXX, *עד*, *witness*.

³ 13a, *But secondly ye do this*, is the obvious addition of the editor in order to connect his intrusion with what follows in 13b ff.

⁴ See above on Zechariah, pp. 305 ff.

ii. 17. *With your words ye have wearied Yahweh,
Yet ye say, With what have we wearied Him ?
By your saying that every ill-doer
Is good in the eyes of Yahweh,
And in them He taketh delight,¹
Or where is the God of judgement ?*

iii. 1. *Behold, I am sending My messenger
To prepare the way before Me,
And sudden shall come to His Temple
The Lord² whom yourselves are seeking,
The covenant Angel in whom ye delight,
Behold He is coming, saith Yahweh of Hosts*

2. *But who may abide the day of His coming,
And who shall stand when He appeareth ?
For He is like the fire of the smelter,
And like to the fullers' acid.*

3. *He shall take His seat to smelt and to purge,³
Yea to purge the sons of Levi,
And refine them like gold and silver,
Till there be that offer Him a righteous oblation*

4. *Then pleasing to Yahweh⁴ shall be
Judah's and Jerusalem's offering
As in the days of yore,
And in the years long past.*

¹ To Marti this line seems a gloss on the preceding.

² הַיְהוָה, for which some suggest הַיְהוָה, 1 Sam. xxiv. 16.

³ Heb. adds *silver* : the longer LXX shows how easily it was added.

⁴ Or *to Me*, reading לִי with only the initial of יְהוָה.

- iii. 5. *And I will draw near you for judgement,
And I will be a swift witness
Against the sorcerers, against the adulterers,
And against the false swearers,
Them that wrong in his hire the hireling,¹
The widow and orphan, the stranger's perverters,
And they fear not Me,
Sayeth Yahweh of Hosts.*

6. REPENTANCE BY TITHES (iii. 6-12)

This section ought perhaps to follow on to the preceding. Those whom it blames for not paying tithes may be the sceptics addressed in the preceding, who have stopped their dues to God out of disappointment that He does nothing. And ver. 6, which goes well with either section, may be the joint between them. However this be, the new section enforces the need of the people's repentance and return to God, if He is to return to them. And when they ask, how are they to return, the prophet answers, By payment of the tithes they have not paid. In withholding these they robbed God, and to this are due the locusts and bad seasons which have afflicted them. If tempted to see in this a legal spirit, let us remember that the neglect to pay the tithes was due to a religious cause, unbelief in God, and that return to belief in Him could not be shown in a more practical way than by paying tithes. This is not prophecy subject to the Law, but prophecy employing the means of grace with which the Law then provided the people.

¹ Some omit *in his hire*.

- iii. 6. *For I Yahweh have not changed,
And ye are the sons of Jacob unworn (?)*¹
7. *From the days of your fathers, ye have turned aside
From My statutes and have not kept them.
Turn unto Me, and I will turn to you,
Saith Yahweh of Hosts.
But ye say, How shall we return ?*
8. *Shall man rob*² *God ?
Yet Me are ye robbing.
And ye say, Wherein do we rob Thee ?
In the tithes and the tribute.*³
- 9 *With the curse ye are cursed
For Me are ye robbing,
The nation, the whole of it.*
10. *Bring all the tithes to the store-house
That provision*⁴ *may be in My House
And pray prove Me in this saith Yahweh,
If I open you not the windows of Heaven
And pour down blessing upon you
Till there be not room enough.*
- II. *And I will check for you the devourer,*⁵
He shall not destroy you the fruits of the ground,

¹ The same old cheats as ever ! Or reading Piel, *have made an end of* (Orelli) ; LXX, *refrain from*. Your sins are understood. LXX connects the next verse with this, and by a different reading of the first word translates *from the sins of your fathers*.

² Heb. קָבַע, only here and Prov. xxii. 32. LXX, עָקַב, *supplant*, cheat, which Wellhausen adopts—a play on the name Jacob.

³ תְּרוּמָה, *heave offering*, tax to the sanctuary or priests, associated with the tithes, as in Deut. xii. 11, to be eaten by the offerer (*ib.* 18), but in Ezekiel by the priests (xliv. 30) ; taken by the people and the Levites to the Temple treasury for the priests (Neh. x. 39, xii. 44) : corn, wine and oil. In P it is the part of each sacrifice which was the priests' due. Ezekiel uses it of the part of the Holy Land that fell to prince and priests.

⁴ שָׂרָף in its later meaning : cf. Job xxiv. 5 ; Prov. xxxi. 15

⁵ That is the locust.

- iii. 11. *Nor shall the vine in the field miscarry,
Sayeth Yahweh of Hosts.*
12. *For a land of delight shall ye be,
Sayeth Yahweh of Hosts.*

7. THE JUDGEMENT TO COME

(iii. 13-iv. 3, Eng. ; iii. 13-21, Heb.)

This is another charge to the doubters among the pious of Israel, who, seeing the success of the wicked, said it is vain to serve God. Deuteronomy was their Canon, and Deuteronomy said that if men sinned they decayed, if righteous they prospered. How different were the facts ! Evil men succeeded : the good won no gain by goodness, nor did their mourning for the sins of their people have effect. Bitterest of all, they had to congratulate wickedness in high places, and God suffered it to go unpunished. *Such things*, says the prophet, *spake they that feared God to each other*—tempted by the dogmatic form of their religion, and forgetful of what Jeremiah and the Evangelist of the Exile had taught them of the meaning of the sufferings of the righteous. Nor does 'Malachi' remind them. His message is that the Lord remembers, has their names written before Him, and when the day of His action comes they shall be separated from the wicked and spared. This transfers the fulfilment of the promise of Deuteronomy to the future and another dispensation. Prophecy still works within the Law

The Apocalypse of this last judgement is one of the grandest. To the wicked it shall be a fire, root and branch shall they be burned out, but to the righteous a fair morning of God, as when dawn comes to those who have been sick and sleepless through the night, and its beams bring healing, even as to the popular

belief of Israel it was the rays of the morning sun which distilled the dew.¹ They break into life and energy, like calves leaping from the dark pen into the sunshine. To this morning landscape a grim figure is added. They shall tread down the wicked and arrogant like ashes.

- iii. 13. *Your words have been hard against Me,
Yahweh sayeth,
Yet ye say, What spake we against Thee?*
14. *Ye said, It is vain to serve God,
What gain though we do keep His charges,
Or walk about in mourning
Before Yahweh of Hosts.*
15. *And now we must hail the arrogant,
Yea built up are the workers of wickedness,
Yea God have they tempted
And yet they get off!*
16. *Thus² to each other spake Yahweh's fearers,
And Yahweh gave heed and hearkened.
And a Book of Remembrance³ was writ before
Him,
For them that feared Yahweh
And that thought on His⁴ Name.*
17. *They shall be Mine, saith Yahweh of Hosts,
On the day when I make up⁵ My treasure.
And them shall I spare as a man doth spare
His son who serves him.*

¹ *A dew of lights*—see *Isaiah i-xxxix*, pp. 468 f.

² LXX; Heb. *then*.

³ Ezek. xiii. 9.

⁴ חשב, *think, plan*, cf. Isa. xiii. 7, etc. Some read חבבי, *love*.

⁵ Lit. *I am doing*; some take it of God's final decisive doing, *Pss.*

iii. 18. *Then shall ye turn and discern
Between the righteous and wicked,
Between him who is serving God
And him who serves Him not.*

iv. 1. *For behold the Day is coming
Burning like a furnace,
When all the proud and doers of evil
Shall be as stubble,*

*And that Day to come shall burn them up,
Saith Yahweh of Hosts,
So that it shall not leave to them
Root or branch.*

2. *But to you that fear My Name the sun shall rise
With righting¹ and healing upon his wings.
And ye shall go forth and leap²
Like calves of the stall.³*

3. *And tread the wicked for they shall be ashes
Beneath the soles of your feet,
In the Day I am to create,
Sayeth Yahweh of Hosts.*

8. THE RETURN OF ELIJAH

(iv. 4-6 Eng. ; iii. 22-24 Heb.)

With his last word the prophet calls the people to remember the Law. This is their one hope before the coming of the day of the Lord. But, in order that the Law may have effect, Prophecy will be sent to bring

¹ Heb. *righteousness, i.e., vindication*, as in Isa. xl-lv, see *Isaiah xl-lv*, pp. 231 ff.

² Hab. i. 8.

³ See note to Amos vi. 4 : Vol. I, p. 180.

it home to the people—Prophecy in the person of her most stern representative. Nothing could better gather up that mingling of Law and Prophecy which we have seen to be characteristic of the work of 'Malachi.' But we must not overlook that 'Malachi' expects this prophecy, which with the Law is to work the conversion of the people, not in the continuance of the prophetic succession by original personalities, developing the principles of their order, but in the return of the first prophet Elijah. This is the confession of Prophecy that the number of her servants is exhausted and her message to Israel fulfilled. She can do no more for the people than she has done. But she will summon up her old energy and fire in the return of her strongest personality and make one great effort to convert the nation before the Lord strike them with judgement.

iv. 4. *Remember the Torah of Moses, My servant,
With which I charged him,
Upon Horeb for all Israel,
Statutes and judgements.*

5. *Behold I am sending unto you
Elijah the Prophet,
Before the coming of Yahweh's Day
The great and the terrible.*

6. *He shall turn the fathers' heart to the children
And the children's heart to their fathers,
Lest I do come and strike
The land with the Ban.*

'Malachi' makes this promise of the Law in the dialect of Deuteronomy: *statutes and judgements with which Yahweh charged Moses for Israel.* But the Law

he enforces is not that which God delivered to Moses on the plains of Shittim, but that which He gave him on Horeb. And so it came to pass. A few years after 'Malachi' prophesied, Ezra the Scribe brought from Babylon the Levitical Code, which appears to have been arranged there, while the colony in Jerusalem were still organising their life under the Deuteronomic legislation. In 444 B.C. this Levitical Code, along with Deuteronomy, became by covenant between the people and their God their Canon Law. In the next of our prophets, Joel, we shall find its influence at work

JOEL

The Day of Yahweh is great and very awful, and who may abide it ?

But now the oracle of Yahweh—Turn ye to Me with all your heart, and with fasting and with weeping and with mourning. And rend your hearts and not your garments, and turn to Yahweh your God, for gracious and merciful is He, long-suffering and abounding in love.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE BOOK OF JOEL

IN the criticism of the Book of Joel are differences of opinion—upon its date, the exact reference of its statements and its relation to parallel passages in other prophets—as wide as even those by which the Book of Obadiah has been assigned to every century between the tenth and the fourth before Christ.¹ As with Obadiah, the problem is not entangled with any doctrinal issue or question of accuracy; but while we saw that Obadiah was not involved in the central controversy of the Old Testament, the date of the Law, not a little in Joel turns upon the latter. Certain descriptions, too, raise the question between a literal and an allegorical interpretation. Thus the Book of Joel carries the student further into the problems of Old Testament criticism, and forms an even more excellent introduction to the latter, than the Book of Obadiah.

I. THE DATE OF THE BOOK

In the history of prophecy the Book of Joel must be either very early or very late, and with few exceptions critics place it either before 800 B.C. or after 500. So great a difference is due to substantial reasons.

¹ See above, Ch. XIII.

Unlike other prophets, save Haggai, 'Malachi' and 'Zechariah' ix-xiv, Joel mentions neither Assyria, which emerged upon the prophetic horizon about 760,¹ nor the Babylonian Empire, which had fallen by 537. The presumption is that he wrote before 760 or after 537. Unlike other prophets, too,² Joel does not charge his people with civic sins; nor does his book bear trace of the struggle between the righteous and unrighteous in Israel, nor of that between the spiritual worshippers of God and the idolaters. The book addresses an undivided nation, who know no God but Yahweh; and again the presumption is that Joel wrote before Amos and his successors had started the spiritual antagonisms which rent Israel, or after the Law had been accepted by the people under Nehemiah.³ The same alternative is suggested by the style. Joel's Hebrew is simple and direct. Either he is an early writer, or he imitates early writers. His book has a number of phrases and verses identical, or nearly identical, with those of prophets from Amos to 'Malachi.' Either they borrowed from Joel, or he borrowed from them.⁴

Of this alternative modern criticism at first preferred the earlier solution, and dated Joel before Amos. So Credner in 1831, and following him Hitzig, Bleek, Ewald, Delitzsch, Keil, Kuenen (up to 1864),⁵ Pusey and others. So, too, at first other critics of the first

¹ See Vol. I. The Assyria of 'Zech.' x. 11 is Syria. See below.

² Two exceptions, Nahum and Habakkuk, are not relevant, their dates being fixed by their references to Assyria and Babylon.

³ See W. R. Smith, art. 'Joel,' *Encycl. Brit.*

⁴ So obvious is this alternative that all critics may be said to grant it, except König (*Einl.*), on whose reasons for placing Joel in the end of the seventh century see below, p. 379, n. 6. Kessner, *Das Zeitalter des Proph. Joel* (1888), deems the date unprovable.

⁵ See *The Religion of Israel*, Vol. I, pp. 86 f.

rank, who, like Kuenen, changed their opinion. And so Kirkpatrick (on the whole), Von Orelli, Robertson,¹ G. G. Cameron and Sinker.² The reasons these scholars give for the early date of Joel are roughly as follows.³ His book lies among the first of the Twelve; while it is recognised that the order of these is not strictly chronological, it is alleged that there is a division between the pre-exilic and post-exilic prophets, and Joel is found among the former. The vagueness of his representations in general, and of his pictures of the Day of Yahweh in particular, is attributed to the simplicity of the earlier religion of Israel, and to the want of that analysis of its leading conceptions which was the work of later prophets.⁴ His horror of the interruption of the daily offerings in the Temple, caused by the plague of locusts,⁵ is ascribed to a fear which pervaded the primitive ages of all peoples.⁶ In Joel's attitude towards other nations, whom he condemns to judgement, Ewald saw 'the old unsubdued warlike spirit of the times of Deborah and David.' The prophet's absorption in the ravages of the locusts is held to reflect the feeling of a purely agricultural community, such as Israel was before the eighth century. The absence of the name of Assyria from the book is assigned to the same unwillingness to give the name as we see in Amos and the earlier prophecies of Isaiah, and it is thought by some that, though not named, the Assyrians are symbolised by the locusts.

¹ The *O.T. and its Contents*, p. 105.

² *Lex Mosaica*, pp. 422, 450.

³ See especially Ewald on Joel in *Prophets of the O.T.*, and Kirkpatrick's fair argument in *Doctrine of the Prophets*, pp. 57 ff.

⁴ On Joel's picture of the Day of Yahweh Ewald says: 'We have it here in its first simple and clear form, nor has it become a subject of ridicule as in Amos.'

⁵ i. 9, 13, 16; ii. 14.

⁶ So Ewald.

The absence of all mention of the Law is also held by some to prove an early date: though others, who believe that the Levitical legislation was extant in Israel from the earliest times, find proof of this in Joel's insistence upon the daily offering. The absence of all mention of a king and the prominence given to the priests are explained by assigning the prophecy to the minority of King Joash of Judah, when Jehoyada the priest was regent; ¹ the charge against Egypt and Edom of spilling innocent blood by Shishak's invasion of Judah, ² and by the revolt of the Edomites under Jehoram; ³ the charge against Philistines and Phœnicians by the Chronicler's account of Philistine raids ⁴ in the reign of Jehoram, and by the oracles of Amos against both nations; ⁵ and the mention of the Vale of Jehoshaphat by that king's defeat of Moab, Ammon and Edom in the Vale of Berakhah. ⁶ These allusions being recognised, it was deduced from them that the parallels between Joel and Amos were due to Amos quoting from Joel. ⁷

These reasons are not equally cogent, ⁸ and even the strongest do not prove more than the possibility of an early date for Joel. ⁹ Nor do they meet every historical difficulty. The minority of Joash, upon which they converge, fell at a time when Aram was not only pro-

¹ 2 Kings xi. 4-21.

² 1 Kings xiv. 25 f.; Joel iii. 17b, 19.

³ 2 Kings viii. 20-22; Joel iii. 19.

⁴ 2 Chron. xxi. 16, 17, xxii. 1; Joel iii. 4-6.

⁵ Amos i; Joel iii. 4-6.

⁶ 2 Chron. xx, especially 26: cf. Joel iii. 2.

⁷ Joel iii (Eng.; iv. Heb.) 16; Amos i. 2. For a list of the various periods to which Joel has been assigned by supporters of this early date, see Kuenen, § 68.

⁸ The reference of Egypt in iii. 19 to Shishak's invasion appears particularly weak.

⁹ Cf. Robertson, *O.T. and its Contents*, 105, and Kirkpatrick's cautious, though convinced, statement of the reasons for an early date.

minent to the thoughts of Israel, but had been felt to be an enemy as powerful as the Philistines or Edomites. But the Book of Joel does not mention Aram. It mentions the Greeks,¹ and, although we cannot say that such a notice was impossible in Israel in the ninth century, it was not only improbable, but no other Hebrew document before the Exile speaks of Greece, and in particular Amos does not when describing the Phœnicians as slave-traders.² The argument that the Book of Joel must be early because placed among the first six of the Twelve Prophets by arrangers of the Prophetic Canon, who could not have forgotten Joel's date had he lived after 450, loses force from the fact that in the same group of pre-exilic prophets we find the exilic Obadiah and the post-exilic Jonah, both in precedence to Micah.

The argument for the early date of Joel is, therefore, not conclusive. There are besides objections to it which make for the other solution of the alternative we started from, and lead us to place Joel after the establishment of the Law by Ezra and Nehemiah in 444 B.C.

A post-exilic date was proposed by Vatke,³ and defended by Hilgenfeld,⁴ and by Duhm in 1875.⁵ From this time the theory made way, winning over many who had held the early date of Joel, like Oort,⁶ Kuenen,⁷ A. B. Davidson,⁸ Driver and Cheyne,⁹ and also Well-

¹ iii. 6 (Heb. iv. 6).

² Amos i. 9.

³ *Bibl. Theol.*, I, p. 462; *Einl.*, pp. 675 ff.

⁴ *Ztschr. f. wissenschaft. Theol.*, X, 4.

⁵ *Theol. der Proph.*, pp. 275 ff.

⁶ *Theol. Tijd.*, 1876, pp. 362 ff. (not seen).

⁷ *Onderz.*, § 68.

⁸ *Expositor*, 1888, Jan.-June, pp. 198 ff.

⁹ See Cheyne, *Origin of Psalter*, XX; Driver, *Introd.*⁶, 1897, supports the late date more strongly than in *Introd.*¹, 1892.

hausen,¹ and finding acceptance and new proofs from an increasing majority of younger critics: Merx,² W. R. Smith,³ Stade,⁴ Matthes and Scholz,⁵ Holzinger,⁶ Farrar,⁷ Kautzsch,⁸ Cornill,⁹ Wildeboer,¹⁰ G. B. Gray,¹¹ Nowack,¹² Marti,¹³ McFadyen,¹⁴ Budde,¹⁵ Bewer,¹⁶ A. R. Gordon,¹⁷ Sellin,¹⁸ and Wade.¹⁹ The reasons which have led to this change of opinion are as follows.

In the first place, the Exile of Judah appears in the Book as past. This is proved, not by the ambiguous phrase, *when I bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem*,²⁰ but by the statement that *the heathen have scattered Israel among the nations and divided their land*.²¹ The plunder of the Temple seems also to be implied.²² Moreover, no great world-power is pictured as either threatening or persecuting God's people; but Israel's active enemies and enslavers are her neighbours, Edomites, Philistines and Phœnicians, and the last are represented as selling Jewish captives to the Greeks. This suits, if it does not absolutely prove, the Persian age, before Artaxerxes Ochus, who was the first Persian

¹ Wellhausen allowed the early date to stand in his ed. of Bleek's *Einleitung*, but adopts the late date in his *Kleine Propheten*.

² *Die Prophetie des Joels*, etc., 1879.

³ *Encycl. Brit.*, 'Joel,' 1881.

⁴ *Gesch.*, II, 207.

⁵ *Theol. Tijdschr.*, 1885, p. 151; *Comm.*, 1885 (neither seen).

⁶ 'Sprachcharakter u. Abfassungszeit des B. Joels,' *Z.A.T.W.*, 1889, pp. 89 ff.

⁷ *Minor Prophets*.

⁸ *Bibel*.

⁹ *Einleitung*.

¹⁰ *Litteratur des A.T.*

¹¹ *Expositor*, September, 1893.

¹² *Comm.*, 1897.

¹³ *Comm.*, 1904.

¹⁴ *Introd.*, 1905.

¹⁵ *Gesch.*, 1906.

¹⁶ *Comm.*, 1911.

¹⁷ *Prophets*, 1916.

¹⁸ *Introd.*, 1923.

¹⁹ *Comm.*, 1925.

²⁰ iv. (Heb.; iii Eng.) 1. For this may only mean *turn again the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem*.

²¹ iv. (Heb.; iii Eng.) 2. The supporters of a pre-exilic date either passed this over or understood it of incursions by the heathen into Israel's territories in the ninth century. It is, however, too universal to suit these.

²² iv. (Heb.; iii Eng.) 5.

to treat the Jews with cruelty.¹ The Greeks, Yavan, do not appear in any Hebrew writer before the Exile ; ² the form in which their name is given by Joel, B'ne ha-Yevanim, has a late sound ³ and from other sources we know that in the fifth and fourth centuries Syrian slaves were in demand in Greece.⁴ Similarly with the internal condition of the Jews as reflected in Joel. No king is mentioned ; but priests are prominent, and elders introduced at least once.⁵ It is an agricultural calamity alone, unmixed with political alarm, which is the omen of the coming Day of the Lord. All this suits Jerusalem under the Persians. Take again the religious temper and emphasis of the Book. The latter is laid, as we have seen, upon the horror of the interruption by locusts of the daily meal and drink offering and in the later history of Israel the proofs are many of the exceeding importance with which the regularity of this was regarded.⁶ This, says A. B. Davidson, ' is

¹ Kautzsch dates after Artaxerxes Ochus, and *c.* 350.

² Ezekiel (xxvii. 13, 19) is the first to give the name Yavan, *i.e.*, *Iafaw*, or Ionian (earlier writers name Egypt, Edom, Arabia and Phœnicia as the great slave-markets : Amos i ; Isa. xi. 11 ; Deut. xxvii 68) ; and Greeks are also mentioned in Isa. lxvi. 19 (a post-exilic passage) ; Zech. ix. 13 ; Dan. viii. 21, x. 20, xi. 2 ; 1 Chron. i. 5, 7, and Gen. x. 2. See below, Ch. XXXI.

³ בני היונים instead of בני יון, just as the Chronicler gives בני הקרחים for בני קרח : Wildeboer, 348, and Matthes, in Holzinger, 94.

⁴ Movers, *Phœn. Alterthum.*, II, 1, pp. 70 *sqq.* : which reference I owe to W. R. Smith's art. in the *Encycl. Brit.*

⁵ With these might be taken the use of קהל (ii. 16) in its sense of a gathering for public worship. The word itself was old in Hebrew, but as time went on it came more and more to mean the convocation of the nation for worship or deliberation. Holzinger, pp. 105 f.

⁶ Cf. Neh. x 33 ; Dan. viii. 11, xi. 31, xii. 11. Also Acts xxvi. 7 : τὸ δωδεκάφυλον ἡμῶν ἐν ἐκτενείᾳ νύκτα καὶ ἡμέραν λατρεύον. Also Jos., XIV *Ant.*, iv. 3, xvi. 2, which mention the horror of the interruption of the daily sacrifice by famine in the siege of Jerusalem, and adds that it happened in no previous siege.

very unlike the way in which all other prophets down to Jeremiah speak of the sacrificial service.' The priests too, are called to take the initiative ; and the summons to a solemn and formal fast, without notice of the particular sins of the people or exhortations to distinct virtues, contrasts with the attitude to fasts of the earlier prophets, and with their insistence on a change of life as the only acceptable form of penitence.¹ And another contrast with the earliest prophets is seen in the apocalyptic atmosphere and colouring of the Book of Joel, as well as in some of the particular figures in which this is expressed, and which are derived from later prophets like Zephaniah and Ezekiel.²

These evidences for a late date are supported, on the whole, by the language of the book. Of this Merx furnishes many details, and by a careful examination, which makes allowance for the poetic form of the Book and for possible glosses, Holzinger has shown symptoms in vocabulary, grammar and syntax which are more reconcilable with a late than with an early date.³ There are a number of Aramaic words, of Hebrew words used in their Aramaic sense, but by no other Hebrew writers, and terms and constructions which appear only in the later books of the Old Testament or seldom in the early ones.⁴ It is true that these do

¹ Cf. Jer. xiv. 12 ; Isa. lviii. 6 ; Zech. vii. 5, 8-10, viii. 19, with Neh. i. 4, ix. 1 ; Ezra viii. 21 ; Jonah iii. 5, 7 ; Esther iv. 3, 16, ix. 31 ; Dan. ix. 3.

² The gathering of the Gentiles to judgement, Zeph. iii. 8 (see p. 69) and Ezek. xxxviii. 22 ; the stream from the Temple to Wady ha-Shittim, Ezek. xlvii. 1 ff., cf. Zech. xiv. 8 ; the outpouring of the Spirit, Ezek. xxxix. 29.

³ *Z.A.T.W.*, 1889, pp. 89-136. Holzinger's own conclusion is stated more emphatically than above.

⁴ For an exhaustive list see Holzinger's article (cf. Driver, *Introd.* * ; *Joel and Amos*, p. 24 ; G. B. Gray, *Expositor*, Sept., 1893, p. 212). But the following (a few not given by Holzinger) are sufficient to prove the above conclusion : i. 2, iv. 4, 𐤁𐤍 . . . 𐤁—this is the form of the

not stand in a great proportion to the rest of Joel's vocabulary and grammar, which is classic and suitable to an early period ; but this may be accounted for by the large use which the prophet makes of the very words of earlier writers. Take this large use into account, and the unmistakable Aramaisms of the book become even more emphatic in their proof of a late date.

The literary parallels between Joel and other writers are unusually many for so small a book. They number at least twenty in seventy-two verses. The other books of the Old Testament in which they occur are about twelve. Where one writer has parallels with many, we do not necessarily conclude that he is the borrower, unless we find that some of the phrases common to both are characteristic of the other writers, or that, in his text of them, there are differences from theirs which may reasonably be reckoned to be of a later origin. But that both of these conditions are found in the parallels between Joel and other prophets has been shown by Driver and G. B. Gray. 'Several of the parallels—either in their entirety or by virtue of

disjunctive interrogative in later O.T. writings, replacing the earlier **אֵלֶּם . . . הֲ**: i. 8, **אֵלִי** only here in O.T., frequent in Aram. ; 13, **נִמְנַע** in Ni. only from Jeremiah on, Qal only twice before Jeremiah and in a number after him ; 18, **נִאֲנַחָה**, if the correct reading, occurs only in the latest writings, the Qal only in these and Aram. ; ii. 2, iv. (Heb. ; iii. Eng.) 20, **דֹּר דֹּר** first in Deut. xxxii. 7, and then exilic and post-exilic frequently ; 8, **שֶׁלַח**, a late word, only in Job xxxiii. 18, xxxvi. 12, 2 Chron. xxiii. 10, xxxii. 5, Neh. iii. 15, iv. 11, 17 ; 20, **סִוֶּף**, *end*, only in 2 Chron. xx. 16 and Eccles., Aram. Daniel, post-Bibl. Aram. and Heb. ; iv. (Heb. ; iii. Eng.) 4, **נִמַּל עַל**, cf. 2 Chron. xx. 11 ; 10, **רִמַּח**, see below ; 11, **הִנַּחַת**, Aram. ; 13, **בִּשַׁל**, in Hebrew to cook (cf. Ezek. xxiv. 5), and in other forms always with that meaning down to the Priestly Writing and 'Zech.' ix-xiv, is used here in the sense of *ripen*, which is frequent in Aram., but does not occur elsewhere in O.T. Besides, Joel uses for the first pers. pronoun **אֲנִי**—ii. 27 (*bis*), iv. 10, 17—which is by far the most usual form with later writers, and not **אֲנִכִּי**, preferred by pre-exilic writers.

certain words which they contain—have their affinities solely or chiefly in the later writings. But the significance [of this] is increased when the very difference between a passage in Joel and its parallel in another book consists in a word or phrase characteristic of the later centuries. That a passage in a writer of the ninth century should differ from its parallel in a subsequent writer by the presence of a word elsewhere confined to the later literature would be strange ; a single instance would not, indeed, be inexplicable in view of the scantiness of extant writings ; but every additional instance—though itself not very convincing—renders the strangeness greater.’ Again, ‘ the variations in some of the parallels as found in Joel have other common peculiarities. This also finds its natural explanation in the fact that Joel quotes : for that the *same* author even when quoting from different sources should quote with variations of the same character is natural, but that *different* authors quoting from a common source should follow the same method of quotation is improbable.’¹ ‘ While in some of the parallels a comparison discloses indications that the phrase in Joel is probably the later, in other cases, even though the expression may in itself be met with earlier, it becomes frequent only in a later age, and the use of it by Joel increases the presumption that he stands by the side of the later writers.’²

In face of so many converging lines of evidence, we shall not wonder at so great a change in the opinion of critics on the date of Joel, and that he should now be assigned generally to a post-exilic date. Some place

¹ G. B. Gray, *Expositor*, 1893, pp. 213 f. For the above conclusions proof is given in his examination of the parallels : 214 ff.

² Driver, *Joel and Amos*, p. 27.

the Book in the sixth century before Christ,¹ some in the first half of the fifth before 'Malachi' and Nehemiah,² but most after the establishment of the Law by Ezra and Nehemiah in 444 B.C.³ It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to decide. Nothing certain can be deduced from the mention of the *city wall* in ii. 9, from which W. R. Smith and Cornill infer that Nehemiah's walls were already built. Nor can we be sure that Joel quotes the phrase, *before the great and terrible day of Yahweh come*, from 'Malachi,'⁴ although this is rendered probable by the character of Joel's other parallels. But the absence of reference to the prophets as a class, the promise of the exclusion of foreigners from Jerusalem,⁵ the judgement of all the heathen, and the apocalyptic character of the Book, incline us to place it after Ezra rather than before. How far after, it is impossible to say, but the absence of feeling against Persia requires a date before the cruelties inflicted by Artaxerxes about 360.⁶

¹ Scholz and Rosenzweig (not seen).

² Hilgenfeld, Duhm, Oort. Driver puts it 'most safely shortly after Haggai and Zechariah i-viii, c. 500 B.C.'

³ Vernes, W. R. Smith, Kuenen, Matthes, Cornill, Nowack, etc.

⁴ Joel iii. 4 (Heb. ; Eng. ii. 31) ; 'Mal.' iv. 5.

⁵ iii. (Eng. ; iv. Heb.) 17.

⁶ Perhaps this is the most convenient place to refer to König's proposal to place Joel in the last years of Josiah. He thinks that i. 17-20 suit the drought in Josiah's reign (Jer. xiv. 2-6), that the name given to the locusts, הַצְפוֹנִי, ii. 20, is due to Jeremiah's enemy *from the north*, and that the phrases *return with all your heart*, ii. 12, and *return to Yahweh your God*, 13, imply a period of apostasy. None of these conclusions is necessary. The absence of reference to the *high places* finds an analogy in Isa. i. 13 ; the מִנְחָה is mentioned in Isa. i. 13 : if Amos viii. 5 testifies to observance of the Sabbath, and Nahum i. 15 to other festivals, who can say a pre-exilic prophet would not be interested in the meal and drink offerings ? But no pre-exilic prophet would have emphasised these as Joel has done. Nor is König's explanation of iii. 2 as of the Assyrian and Egyptian invasion of Judah so probable as that which refers the verse to the Babylonian exile. Nor are König's objections to a date after 'Malachi' convincing. They are that a prophet

One solution, which has been offered for the problems of date presented by the Book of Joel, deserves notice. In his translation of Driver's *Introduction to the Old Testament*,¹ Rothstein questions the integrity of the prophecy, and alleges reasons for dividing it into two. i and ii (Heb. ; i-ii. 27 Eng.) he assigns to an early author, writing in the minority of King Joash, but iii and iv (Heb. ; ii. 28-iii. Eng.) to a date after the Exile, while ii. 20, which W. R. Smith takes as a gloss, he attributes to the editor who has joined the two sections. His reasons are that chs. i. and ii are taken up with the physical plague of locusts, and no troubles from heathen are mentioned ; while iii and iv say nothing of a physical plague, but the evils they deplore are the assaults of enemies. It is within possibility that iii and iv are from another hand than i and ii : we have nothing to disprove that. But there is nothing to prove it. On the contrary, the possibility of all the chapters being from the same hand is obvious. Joel mentions no heathen in the first chapter, because he is engrossed with the plague of locusts. But when this has passed, it is natural that he should take up the standing problem of Israel's history—their relation to other peoples. There is no discrepancy between the two subjects, or between the styles in which they are respectively treated. Rothstein's argument for an

near 'Malachi's' time must have specified as the latter did the reasons for the repentance to which he summoned the people, while Joel gives none (ii. 13a). But the change of attitude may be accounted for by the covenant and Law of 444. 'Malachi' i. 11 speaks of Gentiles worshipping Yahweh, but not even in Jonah iii. 5 is any relation of the Gentiles to Yahweh predicated. Again, the greater exclusiveness of Ezra and his Law may be the cause. Joel, it is true, does not mention the Law, while 'Malachi' does (ii. 8, etc.) ; but this was not necessary if the people had accepted it in 444. Ryle (*Canon of O.T.*, 106 n.) leaves the question open.

¹ Pages 333 f. n.

early date for chs. i and ii has been already answered, and when we come to the exposition of these we shall find still stronger reasons for assigning them to the end of the fifth century before Christ. The assault on the integrity of the prophecy may be said to have failed, though no one who remembers the composite character of the prophetical books can deny that the question is still open.¹ See especially Bewer, § 1.

2. THE INTERPRETATION OF THE BOOK: IS IT DESCRIPTION, ALLEGORY OR APOCALYPSE?

Another question which we must discuss before passing to the exposition is of the attitude and intention of the prophet. Does he describe or predict, give history or allegory?

Joel starts from a plague of locusts, which he describes not only in the ravages they commit upon the land, but in their foreshadowing of the Day of the Lord. They are the heralds of God's judgement upon the nation. Let the latter repent instantly with a day of fasting and prayer. Peradventure Yahweh will relent, and spare His people. So far i. 2-ii. 17. Then comes a break. An uncertain interval seems to elapse; and in ii. 18 we are told that Yahweh's zeal for Israel has been stirred, and He has had pity on His folk. Promises follow, *first*, of deliverance from the plague and of restoration of the harvests it has eaten, and *second*, of the outpouring of the Spirit on all classes: ii. 17-32 (Eng.; ii. 17-iii. Heb.). Ch. iii. (Eng.; iv. Heb.)

¹ Vernes, *Histoires des Idées Messianiques depuis Alexandre*, pp. 13 ff., had asserted that i and ii must be by a different author from iii and iv, because the former has to do wholly with the writer's present, with which the latter has no connection, but is eschatological. But in his *Mélanges de Crit. Relig.*, pp. 218 ff., Vernes allows that his arguments are not conclusive, and that all four chapters may have come from the same hand.

gives another picture of the Day of Yahweh, this time a judgement upon the enemies of Israel. They shall be brought together, condemned judicially by Him, and slain by His hosts, His 'supernatural' hosts. Jerusalem shall be freed from strangers, and the fertility of the land restored.

These are the contents of the book. Do they describe an actual plague of locusts already experienced or predict this as still to come? Are the locusts real locusts, or a symbol of the human foes of Israel? To these questions, which cross and involve each other, three kinds of answer have been given.

A large majority of critics¹ hold that Joel starts, like other prophets, from the facts of experience. His locusts, though described with poetic hyperbole—for are they not the vanguard of the Day of God's judgement?—are real locusts; their plague has just been felt by his contemporaries, whom he summons to repent, and to whom, when they have repented, he promises the restoration of their ruined harvests, the outpouring of the Spirit, and judgement on their foes. Prediction is thus found only in the second half of the book (ii. 18 onwards): it rests on a basis of narrative and exhortation which fills the first half.

But other critics have argued (and with force) that the prophet's language about the locusts is too aggravated and too ominous to be limited to the natural plague which these insects periodically inflicted upon Palestine. Joel (they reason) would hardly have connected so common an adversity with so singular and ultimate a crisis as the Day of the Lord. Under the figure of locusts he must be describing some more fateful agency of God's wrath. More than one trait of his

¹ *I.e.*, Hitzig, Vatke, Ewald, W. R. Smith, Kuenen, Kirkpatrick, Driver, Davidson, Nowack, and most other recent critics

description appears to imply a human army. This can only be one or other, or all, of those heathen powers whom at different periods God raised up to chastise His people; and this opinion is held to be supported by the facts that ii. 20 speaks of them as the Northern and iii. (Eng.; iv Heb.) deals with the heathen. The locusts of i and ii are the heathen of iii. In i and ii they are described as threatening Israel, but on condition of Israel repenting (ii. 18 ff.) the Day of the Lord which they herald shall be their destruction and not Israel's (iii).¹

The supporters of this allegorical interpretation of Joel are divided as to whether the heathen powers symbolised by locusts are described as having already afflicted Israel or are predicted as still to come. Hilgenfeld² says that the prophet in i and ii speaks of their ravages as past. To him their fourfold plague described in i. 4 symbolises four Persian assaults upon Palestine, after the last of which, in 358, the prophecy must therefore have been written.³ Others read them as still to come. In our country Pusey has been the strongest supporter of this theory.⁴ To him the whole book, written before Amos, is prediction. 'It extends from the prophet's own day to the end of time.' Joel calls the scourge the Northern: he directs the priests to pray for its removal, that *the heathen may not rule over* God's heritage;⁵ he describes the agent as a responsible one;⁶ his imagery goes beyond the effect of

¹ This allegorical interpretation was a favourite with the early Christian Fathers: cf. Jerome.

² *Zeitschr. für wissenschaft. Theologie*, 1860, pp. 412 ff.

³ Cambyses 525, Xerxes 484, Artaxerxes Ochus 460 and 458.

⁴ Among other representatives of this opinion are Bertholdt (*Einl.*) and Hengstenberg (*Christol.*, III, 352 ff.), the latter of whom saw in the four kinds of locusts the Assyrian-Babylonian, the Persian, the Greek, and the Roman tyrants of Israel.

⁵ ii. 17.

⁶ ii. 20.

locusts, and threatens drought, fire and plague,¹ the assault of cities and the terrifying of peoples.² The scourge is to be destroyed in a way physically inapplicable to locusts ;³ and the promises of its removal include the remedy of ravages which mere locusts could not inflict : the captivity of Judah is to be turned, and the land recovered from foreigners who are to be banished from it.⁴ Pusey thus reckons as future the relenting of God, consequent upon the people's penitence : ii. 18 ff. The past tenses in which it is related he takes as instances of the prophetic perfect, according to which the prophets express their assurance of things to come by describing them as if they had already happened.

This is a strong case for the predictive and allegorical character of the Book of Joel ; but consideration will show that the facts on which it is grounded are capable of a different explanation than that which it assumes, and that Pusey has overlooked other facts which force us to a literal interpretation of the locusts as a plague already past, even though they are described in the language of hyperbole.

For, in the first place, Pusey's theory implies that the prophecy is addressed to a future generation, who shall be alive when the predicted invasions of heathen come upon the land. Whereas Joel obviously addresses his own contemporaries. The prophet and his hearers are one. *Before our eyes*, he says, *the food has been cut off*.⁵ As obviously, he speaks of the plague of locusts as of something that has just happened. His hearers can compare its effects with past disasters, which it has exceeded ;⁶ and it is their duty to hand

¹ i. 19, 20.

⁴ iii. (Heb. iv.) 1 f., 17.

² Plur. (ii. 6).

⁵ i. 16.

³ ii. 20.

⁶ i. 2 f.

down its story to future generations.¹ Again, his description is that of a physical, not of a political plague. Fields and gardens, vines and figs, are devastated by being stripped and gnawed. Drought accompanies the locusts, the seed shrivels beneath the clods, the trees languish, the cattle pant for want of water.² These are not the trail which an invading army leave behind them. In support of his theory that human hosts are meant, Pusey points to the verses which bid the people pray *that the heathen rule not over them*, and describe the invaders as attacking cities.³ But the former phrase may be rendered with equal propriety, *that the heathen make not satirical songs about them*; ⁴ and as to the latter, not only do locusts invade towns as Joel describes, but his words that the invader steals into houses like *a thief* are more applicable to the insidious entrance of locusts than to the open assault of a storming party. Moreover, Pusey and the other allegorical interpreters of the book overlook the fact that Joel never so much as hints at the invariable effects of a human invasion, massacre and plunder. He describes no slaying nor looting; but when he comes to promise that Yahweh will restore the losses which have been sustained by His people, he defines them as the years which His army has *eaten*.⁵ All this proof is clenched by the fact that Joel compares the locusts to actual soldiers.⁶ They are *like* horsemen, their sound is *like* chariots, they run *like* horses, and *like* men of war they leap upon the wall. Joel could never have compared a real army to itself!

The allegorical interpretation is thus untenable. But some, while admitting this, are yet not disposed to

¹ i. 3.⁴ למשל בם⁶ ii. 4 ff.² i. 17 ff.³ ii. 17, ii. 9 ff.⁵ A. B. Davidson, *Expos.*, 1888, pp. 200 f.

take the first part of the book for narrative. They admit that the prophet means a plague of locusts, but deny that he is speaking of a plague already past, and hold that his locusts are still to come, as much a part of the future as the pouring out of the Spirit ¹ and the judgement of the heathen in the Valley of Jehoshaphat.² All alike are signs or accompaniments of the Day of Yahweh, and that Day has still to break. The prophet's scenery is apocalyptic; the locusts are 'eschatological locusts,' not historical. This interpretation of Joel has been elaborated by Dr. Adalbert Merx, and the following is a summary of his opinions.³

After examining the book along the lines of exposition proposed, Merx finds himself unable to trace any plan or sign of a plan. Joel weaves in one past, present and future, paints situations only to blot them out and put others in their place, starts processes but develops none. His book shows no insight into God's plan with Israel, but is purely external; the bearing and end of it is the material prosperity of the land of Judah. From this he concludes that the book is not an original work but a summary of passages from previous prophets, that with reflections of the life of the Jews after the Return lead us to assign it to that period of literature which Nehemiah inaugurated by the collection of national writings. Joel gathered up the older pictures of the Messianic age and welded them in one long prayer by the fervid belief that that age was near. But while the older prophets spoke upon the ground of fact and rose from this to a picture of the last punishment, the still life of Joel's time had nothing such to offer and he had to seek another basis for his prophetic flight. It is probable that he sought this in the relation of Type and Antitype. The Antitype he found in the liberation from Egypt, the darkness and the locusts of which he transferred to his canvas from Exodus x. 4-6. The locusts are neither real nor symbolic, but ideal.

¹ Eng. ii. 28 ff., Heb. iii.

² Eng. iii., Heb. iv.

³ *Die Prophetie des Joel u. ihre Ausleger*, 1879. The following criticism of Merx's views is from an (unpublished) review which I wrote in 1881.

This is the method of the Midrash and Haggada which constantly placed over against each other the deliverance from Egypt and the last judgement. It is a method already found in Ezek. xxxvii and Ps. lxxviii. Joel's locusts are borrowed from the Egyptian plagues, but presented as signs of the Last Day. They will bring it near by famine, drought and the interruption of worship described in i. Ch. ii, which Merx keeps distinct from i, is based on a study of Ezekiel, from whom Joel has borrowed, among other things, *the garden of Eden and the Northerner*. The two verses held to be historic, 18 and 19, Merx takes as continuing the prayer of the priests, pointing the verbs so as to turn them from perfects into futures. The rest of the book is pieced together from many prophets, chiefly Isaiah and Ezekiel, but without the spiritual feeling of the one, or the magnificence of the other. Special nations are mentioned, but in this portion we have to do not with past events, but with general views, and these not original, but conditioned by expressions of earlier writers. There is no history in the book: it is ideal, mystical, apocalyptic. That is to say, there is no real prophet, only an old man warming his feeble hands over a few embers that he has scraped from the ashes of ancient fires, now nearly wholly dead.

Merx has traced Joel's relations to other prophets, and reflection of a late date in Israel's history, with ingenuity; but his treatment of the text and his exegesis are forced and fanciful. In face of the support which the Massoretic reading of the hinge of the book, ii. 18 ff., receives from ancient versions, and of its inherent probability and harmony with the context, Merx's textual emendation is unnecessary, besides being unnatural;¹ while the objections which we have already found valid against the allegorical interpretation equally dispose of this mystical one. Merx distorts the evident features of the book almost as much as Hengstenberg and Pusey. He has lifted out of time that which plainly purports to be historical. His literary criticism is as unsound as his textual. It is only by ignoring the poetry of ch. i that he transplants it to the future. Joel's figures are too vivid, too actual, to be predictive or mystical. And the whole interpretation wrecks itself on the same verse as the allegorical, i. 16, in which Joel speaks of having suffered with his hearers the plague he describes.

¹ 'The proposal to change the pointing so as to transform the *perfects* into futures, . . . is an exegetical monstrosity.'—W. R. Smith.

We may, therefore, conclude that the allegorical and mystical interpretations of Joel are impossible ; and that the only reasonable view of our prophet is that which regards him as calling, in i. 2-ii. 17, upon his contemporaries to repent in face of a plague of locusts, so unusually severe that he feels it ominous of even the Day of the Lord ; and as promising material, political and spiritual triumphs to Israel in consequence of their repentance, either consummated, or anticipated by the prophet as certain.

It is true that the account of the locusts appears to bear features which conflict with the literal interpretation. Some of these, however, vanish upon a fuller knowledge of the awful degree which such a plague has been testified to reach by competent observers of our own time.¹ Those that remain may be attributed partly to the hyperbole of Joel's style, and partly to the fact that he sees in the plague far more than itself. The locusts are signs of the Day of Yahweh. Joel treats them as we found Zephaniah treating the Scythian hordes of his day. They are as real as the latter, but on them as on the latter the glare of Apocalypse has fallen, investing them with that ominousness which is the sole justification of the allegorical and mystic interpretation of their appearance.

To the same sense of their office as heralds of the last day, we owe the description of the locusts in ii. 20 as *the Northerner*. The North is not the quarter from which locusts usually reach Palestine, nor is there reason to suppose that by naming the North Joel meant only to emphasise the unusual character of these swarms. Rather he takes a name employed since Jeremiah's

¹ Even the comparison of the ravages of the locusts to burning by fire. But probably also Joel means that they were accompanied by drought and forest fires. See below.

time to express the instruments of Yahweh's wrath in the day of His judgement. The name is typical of Doom, and so Joel applies it to his fateful locusts.

3. STATE OF THE TEXT AND THE STYLE OF THE BOOK

Joel's style is fluent and clear, both when describing the locusts, in which he is most original, and when predicting, in apocalyptic language largely borrowed from earlier prophets, the Day of Yahweh. To the ease of understanding him we may attribute the sound state of the text and its freedom from glosses. In this, like most of the books of the post-exilic prophets, especially Haggai, 'Malachi' and Jonah, Joel's book contrasts favourably with those of the older prophets; and that also, to some degree, is proof of his lateness. The Greek translators, on the whole, understood Joel easily. In their version there are the usual differences of grammatical construction, especially in the pronominal suffixes and verbs, and of punctuation; but few expansions and no real additions. These are noted in the translation below.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE LOCUSTS AND THE DAY OF THE LORD

JOEL I-II. 17

JOEL, we have seen, found the motive of his prophecy in a recent plague of locusts, the appearance of which and their havoc are described in full detail. Writing not only as a poet but as a seer, who reads in the locusts signs of the Day of the Lord, Joel has put into his picture features which carry the imagination beyond the limits of experience. And yet, if we had lived through such a plague, we should be able to recognise how little licence the poet has taken, and that the seer, so far from unduly mixing with his facts the colours of Apocalypse, must have experienced in the plague itself enough to provoke the religious and monitory use which he makes of it.

The present writer has seen but one swarm of locusts, in which, though small and soon swept away by the wind, he felt not only some features that Joel describes, but even a degree of that singular helplessness before a calamity of portent beyond itself, which, by the confession of many observers the locust-plague and the earthquake induce above all other physical disasters. One summer afternoon, upon the plain of Hauran, a long bank of mist grew rapidly from the western horizon. The day was dull, and as the mist

rose athwart the sunbeams, struggling through clouds, it gleamed cold and white, like the front of a snow-storm. When it came near, it seemed more than a mile broad and was dense enough to turn the atmosphere raw and dirty, with a chill as of a sea-fog, only that this was not due to a fall in the temperature. Nor was there the silence of a mist. We were enveloped by a noise, less like the whirring of wings than the rattle of hail or the crackling of bush on fire. Myriads on myriads of locusts were about us, covering the ground, and shutting out the view in all directions. Though they drifted before the wind, there was no confusion in their ranks! They sailed in unbroken lines, sometimes straight, sometimes wavy; and when they passed, pushing through our caravan, they left almost no stragglers, except from the last battalion, and only the few dead which we had caught in our hands. After several minutes they were again but a lustre on the air, and so melted into heavy clouds in the east.

Modern travellers furnish us with impressions of the innumerable multitudes of a locust-plague, the succession of their swarms through days and weeks, and the desolation they leave behind them. Mr. Doughty writes:¹ 'There hopped before our feet a minute brood of second locusts, of a leaden colour, with budding wings like the spring leaves, and born of those gay swarms which a few weeks before had passed over and despoiled the desert. After forty days these also would fly as a pestilence, yet more hungry than the former, and fill the atmosphere.' And later: 'The clouds of the second locust brood which the Arabs call 'Am'dan, *pillars*, flew over us for some days, invaded the booths and for blind hunger even bit our shins.'² It was 'a storm of rustling wings.'³ 'This year was

¹ *Arabia Deserta*, Vol. I, p. 307.

² *Id.* p. 335.

³ *Id.* p. 396.

remembered for the locust swarms and great summer heat.' ¹ A traveller in South Africa ² says: 'For the space of ten miles on each side of the Sea-Cow river and eighty or ninety miles in length, an area of sixteen or eighteen hundred square miles, the whole surface might literally be said to be covered with them.' In his book on South Africa, Mr. Bryce writes: ³ 'It is a strange sight, beautiful if you can forget the destruction it brings with it. The whole air, to twelve or even eighteen feet above the ground, is filled with the insects, reddish-brown in body, with bright, gauzy wings. When the sun's rays catch them it is like the sea sparkling with light. When you see them against a cloud they are like the dense flakes of a driving snow-storm. You feel as if you had never before realised immensity in number. Vast crowds of men gathered at a festival, countless tree-tops rising along the slope of a forest ridge, the chimneys of London houses from the top of St. Paul's—all are as nothing to the myriads of insects that blot out the sun above and cover the ground beneath and fill the air whichever way one looks. The breeze carries them swiftly past, but they come on in fresh clouds, a host of which there is no end, each of them a harmless creature which you can catch and crush in your hand, but appalling in their power of collective devastation.'

And take three testimonies from Syria: 'The quantity of these insects is a thing incredible to any one who has not seen it himself; the ground is covered by them for several leagues.' ⁴ 'The whole face of the mountain ⁵ was black with them. On they came like

¹ *Arabia Deserta*, Vol. I, p. 336.

² Barrow, *South Africa*, p. 257, quoted by Pusey.

³ *Impressions of South Africa*, by James Bryce, 1897.

⁴ Volney, *Voyage en Syrie*, I, 277, quoted by Pusey.

⁵ Lebanon.

a living deluge. We dug trenches and kindled fires, and beat and burnt to death heaps upon heaps, but the effort was utterly useless. They rolled up the mountain-side, and poured over rocks, walls, ditches and hedges, those behind covering up and passing over the masses already killed. For some days they continued to pass. The noise made by them in marching and foraging was like that of a heavy shower falling upon a distant forest.' ¹ 'The roads were covered with them, all marching and in regular lines, like armies of soldiers, with their leaders in front; and all the opposition of man to resist their progress was in vain.' Having consumed the plantations in the country, they entered the towns and villages. 'When they approached our garden all the farm servants were employed to keep them off, but to no avail; though our men broke their ranks for a moment, no sooner had they passed the men, than they closed again, and marched forward through hedges and ditches as before. Our garden finished, they continued their march toward the town, devastating one garden after another. They have also penetrated into most of our rooms: whatever one is doing one hears their noise from without, like the noise of armed hosts, or the running of many waters. When in an erect position their appearance at a little distance is like that of a well-armed horseman.' ²

Locusts are notoriously adapted for a plague, 'since to strength incredible for so small a creature, they add saw-like teeth, admirably calculated to eat up all the herbs in the land.' ³ They are the incarnation of

¹ Abridged from Thomson's *The Land and the Book*, ed. 1877, Northern Palestine, pp. 416 ff.

² From Driver's abridgment (*Joel and Amos*, p. 90) of an account in the *Journ. of Sacred Lit.*, October, 1865, pp. 235 f.

³ Morier, *A Second Journey through Persia*, p. 99, quoted by Pusey, from whose notes and Driver's excursus upon locusts in *Joel and Amos* the following quotations have been borrowed.

hunger. No voracity is like theirs, the voracity of little creatures, whose million separate appetites nothing is too minute to escape. They devour first grass and leaves, fruit and foliage, everything that is green and juicy. Then they attack the young branches of trees, and then the hard bark of the trunks.¹ 'After eating up the corn, they fell upon the vines, the pulse, the willows, and even the hemp, notwithstanding its great bitterness.'² 'The bark of figs, pomegranates and oranges, bitter, hard and corrosive, escaped not their voracity.'³ 'They are particularly injurious to the palm-trees; these they strip of every leaf and green particle, the trees remaining like skeletons with bare branches.'⁴ 'The gardens outside Jaffa are now completely stripped, even the bark of the young trees having been devoured, and look like a birch-tree forest in winter.'⁵ 'The bushes were eaten quite bare, though the animals could not have been long on the spot. They sat by hundreds on a bush gnawing the rind and the woody fibres.'⁶ 'Bamboo groves have been stripped of their leaves and left standing like saplings after a rapid bush fire, and grass has been devoured so that the bare ground appeared as if burned.'⁷ 'The country did not seem to be burnt, but to be much covered with snow through the whiteness of the trees and the dryness of the herbs.'⁸ The fields finished, they invade towns and houses, in search of stores. Victual of all kinds, hay, straw, and even linen and woollen clothes and leather bottles, they consume or

¹ Shaw's *Travels in Barbary*, 1738, pp. 236-238; Jackson's *Travels to Morocco*.

² Adansson, *Voyage au Senegal*, p. 88.

³ Chénier, *Recherches Historiques sur les Maures*, III, p. 496.

⁴ Burckhardt, *Notes*, II, 90.

⁵ *Journ. of Sac. Lit.*, Oct., 1865.

⁶ Lichtenstein, *Travels in South Africa*.

⁷ *Standard*, Dec. 25, 1896.

⁸ Fr. Alvarez.

tear in pieces.¹ They flood through the open, unglazed windows and lattices : nothing can keep them out.

These extracts prove what little need Joel had of hyperbole in order to read his locusts as signs of the Day of the Lord ; especially if we keep in mind that locusts are worst in hot summers, and often accompany a drought along with its consequence of prairie and forest fires. Some have thought that, in introducing the effects of fire, Joel only meant to paint the burnt look of a land after locusts have ravaged it. But locusts do not drink up the streams, nor cause the seed to shrivel in the earth.² By these the prophet must mean drought, and by *the flame that has burned all the trees of the field*,³ the forest fire, finding an easy prey in the trees reduced to firewood by the locusts' teeth.

Even in the passage in which he passes from history to Apocalypse, from the locusts to the lurid dawn of Yahweh's Day, Joel keeps within the actual facts :—

*Day of darkness and murk,
Day of cloud and heavy mist,
Like dawn scattered on the mountains,
A people many and powerful.*⁴

No one who has seen a cloud of locusts can question the realism even of this picture : the heavy gloom of the immeasurable mass of them, shot by gleams of light where a few of the sun's imprisoned beams have broken through or across the storm of lustrous wings. This is like dawn beaten down upon the hilltops, and crushed by rolling masses of cloud, in conspiracy to prolong the night. The only point at which Joel leaves fact for the wilder combinations of Apocalypse is at

¹ Barheb., *Chron. Syr.*, p. 784 ; Burckhardt, *Notes*, II, 90.

² i. 20, 17.

³ i. 19.

⁴ ii. 2.

the close of his description, ii. 10 and 11, and just before his call to repentance. Here we find, mixed with the locusts, earthquake and thunderstorm; and Joel has borrowed these from the classic pictures of the Day of the Lord, using some of the phrases of the latter:—

*Earth trembles before them,
Heaven quakes,
Sun and moon become black,
The stars withdraw their shining,
And Yahweh utters His voice before His army.*

Joel, then, describes, and does not unduly enhance, the terrors of an actual plague. At first his whole strength is so bent to make his people feel these, that, though about to call to repentance, he does not detail the sins which require this. In his opening verses he summons the drunkards,¹ but that is to lend vividness to his picture of facts, because men of such habits will be the first to feel a plague of this kind. Nor does Joel yet ask his hearers what the calamity portends. At first he only demands that they shall feel it, in its uniqueness and own sheer force.

Hence the style of the passage, letter for letter, is one of the heaviest in prophecy. The proportion in Hebrew of liquids to the other letters is not large; here it is smaller than ever. The explosives and dentals are numerous. There are keywords, with hard consonants and long vowels, used again and again: Shuddadh, 'ābhlah, 'umlal, hôbhîsh. The longer lines into which Hebrew parallelism tends to run are replaced by a rapid series of short, heavy phrases, falling like blows. Critics have called it rhetoric. But it is rhetoric of a high

order and suited to the prophet's purpose. Look at i. 10 : Shuddadh sadheh, 'ābhlah 'adhamah, shuddadh daghan, hōbhîsh tîrôsh, 'umlal yîṣhar.¹ Joel loads his clauses with the most leaden letters he can find, and drops them in quick succession, repeating the same heavy word again and again, as if to stun the careless people into some sense of the bare weight of the calamity befallen them.

Now Joel does this because he believes that, if his people feel the plague in its proper violence, they must be convinced that it comes from God. The keynote of this part is found in i. 15 : *Keshôdh mishshaddhai, like violence from the All-violent doth it come.* 'If you feel this as it is, you will feel Yahweh Himself in it. By these very blows, He and His Day are near. We had been forgetting how near.' Joel mentions no crime, nor enforces any virtue : how could he have done so with so strong a sense that 'the Judge was at the door' ? To make men feel that they had forgotten they were in reach of that Almighty Hand, which could strike so suddenly and so hard—Joel had time only to make men feel that, and to call them to repentance. In this we probably see some reflection of the age : an age when men's thoughts were thrusting the Deity further and further from their life ; when they put His Law and Temple between Him and themselves ; and when their religion, devoid of the sense of His Presence, had become a set of formal observances, the rending of garments and not of hearts. But He, whom His ordinances had hidden from His people, has burst through nature and in sheer force of calamity. He has revealed Himself, El-Shaddhai, *God All-violent*, as He was known to their fathers, who had no elaborate

¹ Cf. i. 12, 13, and many verses in ch. ii.

law or ritual to put between their fearful hearts and His terrible strength, but cowered before Him, helpless on the stripped soil, naked beneath His thunder. By just such means did Elijah and Amos bring God home to the hearts of ancient Israel. In Joel we see the revival of the old nature-religion, and the revenge that it was bound to take upon the elaborate systems which had displaced it, but which by their formalism and artificial completeness had made men forget that near presence and direct action of the Almighty which it is nature's office to enforce upon the heart.

The thing is true, and permanently valid. Only the great natural processes can break up the systems of dogma and ritual in which we make ourselves comfortable and formal, and drive us out into God's open air of reality. In the crash of nature's forces particular sins are forgotten, and we feel, as in the presence of God, our whole, deep need of repentance. So far from blaming the absence of special ethics in Joel's sermon, we accept it as natural and proper.

Such, then, appears to be the explanation of the first part of the prophecy, and its development towards the call to repentance which follows it. If we are correct, the assertion¹ is false that no plan was meant by the prophet. For not only is there a plan, but the plan is most suitable to the requirements of Israel, after their adoption of the whole Law in 445, and forms one of the necessary developments of religion: the revival, in an artificial period, of those primitive forces of religion which nature supplies, and which are needed to correct formalism and the forgetfulness of the presence of the Almighty. We see in this, too, the reason of Joel's archaic style, both of conception and expression :

¹ Of Merx and others : see above, p. 386.

his likeness to early prophets which has led some to place him between Elijah and Amos.¹ They are wrong. Joel's simplicity is that not of early prophecy, but of the austere forces of this revived and applied to the artificiality of a later age.

One other proof of Joel's conviction of the religious meaning of the plague might also have been pled by the earlier prophets, but certainly not in the terms in which Joel expresses it. Amos and Hosea had both described the destruction of the land's fertility in their day as God's displeasure on His people and (as Hosea puts it) His divorce of His Bride from Himself.² But by them the physical calamities were not threatened alone: banishment from the land and from enjoyment of its fruits was to follow on drought, locusts and famine. In threatening no captivity Joel differs from the early prophets. It is a mark of his late date. And he also describes the divorce between Yahweh and Israel, through the interruption of the ritual by the plague, in terms and with an accent which could hardly have been employed in Israel before the Exile. After the rebuilding of the Temple and restoration of the daily sacrifices, the regular performance of these was regarded by the Jews with a superstitious sense of its indispensableness to the national life. Before the Exile, Jeremiah attaches no importance to it, in circumstances in which it would have been not unnatural for him, priest as he was, to do so.³ But after the Exile, the greater scrupulousness of the religious life, and its absorption in ritual, laid emphasis upon the daily offering, which increased to a painful degree of anxiety as the centuries went on.⁴ The New Testament speaks of

¹ See above, p. 370.

² See Vol. I, pp. 254, 258 ff.

³ Jer. xiv.

⁴ Cf. Ezek. xlvi. 15 on the *Thamid*, and Neh. x. 33; Dan. viii. 11. *vi.* 31, *xii.* 11: cf. p. 375.

*the Twelve Tribes constantly serving God day and night ;*¹ and Josephus, while declaring that in no siege of Jerusalem before the last did the interruption ever take place in spite of the stress of famine and war combined, records the awful impression made alike on Jew and heathen by the giving up of the daily sacrifice on the 17th of July, A.D. 70, during the investment of the city by Titus.² This disaster, which Judaism painfully feared at every crisis in its history, actually happened, Joel tells us, during the famine caused by the locusts. *Cut off are the meal and the drink offerings from the house of Yahweh.*³ *Is not food cut off from our eyes, joy and gladness from the house of our God ?*⁴ *Perhaps He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him, meal and drink offering for Yahweh our God.*⁵ The break 'of the continual symbol of gracious intercourse between Yahweh and His people, and the main office of religion,' means divorce between Him and Israel. *Wail like a bride girt in sackcloth for the husband of her youth ! Wail, O ministers of the altar, O ministers of God !*⁶ This was another reason for reading in the plague of locusts more than a physical meaning. This was another proof, only too intelligible to scrupulous Jews, that the terrible Day of the Lord was at hand.

Thus Joel reaches the climax of his argument. Yahweh is near, His Day is about to break. From this it is impossible to escape on the narrow path of disaster by which the prophet has led up to it. But beneath that path the prophet spreads the ground of a broad truth, and on that truth, while judgement remains still as real, there is room for the people to turn from it. If experience has shown that God is in the present, near and inevitable, faith remembers that He is there

¹ Acts xxvi. 7.² XIV, *Antt.* iv. 3, xvi. 2 ; VI, *Wars*, ii. 1.³ i. 9, 13.⁴ i. 16.⁵ ii. 14.⁶ i. 8, 13.

not willingly for judgement, but with all His ancient feeling for Israel and His zeal to save her. If the people choose to turn, Yahweh, as their God and One Who works for their sake, will save them. Of this God assures them by His own word. For the first time in the prophecy He speaks for Himself. Hitherto the prophet has been describing the plague and summoning to penitence. *But now Rede of Yahweh of Hosts.*¹ The great covenant name, *Yahweh your God*, is solemnly repeated as symbolic of the historic origin and age-long endurance of Yahweh's relation to Israel; and the words of blessing are repeated which were given when Israel was called at Sinai and the covenant ratified:—

*For He is gracious and merciful,
Long-suffering and plenteous in leal love,
And relents of the evil*

He has threatened upon you. Once more the nation is summoned to try Him by prayer: the solemn prayer of all Israel, pleading that He should not give His people to reproach.

*The Word of Yahweh
which came to Yo'el the son of Pethû'el.*²

- i. 2. *Hearken to this, ye old men,
And give ear, all who dwell in the land!
Has the like ever been in your days,
Or in the days of your fathers?*
3. *Tell ye your children about it,
And your children their children,
And their children³ to the next generation.*

¹ ii. 12.

² LXX, Βαθουήλ.

³ *To their children, and their children, regarded by some as an addition.*

- i. 4. *What the Shearer left the Swarmer ate,
What the Swarmer left the Lapper ate,
What the Lapper left ate the Devourer.*

These are four names for locusts, which it is best to translate literally. Some think they represent one swarm in four stages of development, but this cannot be, because the same swarm never returns on its path to complete the work of destruction which it began in an earlier stage of its growth. Nor can the first-named be the adult brood from whose eggs the others spring, as Doughty has described,¹ for that would account only for two of the four names. Joel rather describes successive swarms, without reference to the stages of growth, and he does so as a poet, using, in order to bring out the force of its devastation, several of the Hebrew names that were given to the locust as epithets of various aspects of its destructive power. The names cannot be said to rise in climax, but the most sinister is reserved to the last.²

5. *Rouse ye, drunkards, and weep,
And wail, all bibbers of wine,
For the new wine cut off from your mouth !*
6. *For a folk is come up on My land,
Powerful and numberless ;
His teeth are the teeth of the lion,
And the fangs³ of the lioness his.*

¹ See above. pp. 391 f.

² חסיל from חסל, used in the O.T. only in Deut. xxviii. 38, *to devour* ; but in post-biblical Hebrew *to utterly destroy, bring to an end*. *Talmud Jerus.* : Taanith III, 66d, 'Why is the locust called חסיל ? Because it brings everything to an end.'

³ A.V. *cheek-teeth*, R.V. *jaw-teeth*, or *eye-teeth*. 'Possibly (from the Arabic) *projectors*' : Driver.

7. *My vines he has turned to waste,
And My fig trees to splinters.
He has peeled them and strewn them.
Bleached are their branches.*
8. *Wail as a bride girded in sackcloth
For the spouse of her youth !*
9. *Cut off are the meal and drink offerings
From the House of Yahweh.
In grief are the priests,
The ministers of Yahweh.*
10. *Blasted the field,
In grief the ground,
For the corn is blasted,
Abashed the new wine,
The oil pines away.*
11. *Be abashed, O ploughmen,
Wail, O vine dressers,
For the wheat and the barley.
Lost is the harvest of the field.*
12. *The vine is abashed
And the fig-tree drooping.
Pomegranate, palm too, and apple,
All trees of the field dried up ;
Yea, joy is abashed
And off from the children of men.*

The same feeling is attributed to men and to the fruits of the land : *In grief are the priests, the ground is in grief.* And it is repeatedly said that all are *abashed*. By this heavy word we seek to render the effect of the similarly sounding 'hôbhîsha,' which the English version renders *ashamed*. It means to be frustrated, and so *disheartened, put out ; soured* would be an equivalent applicable to the vine, to joy and to men's hearts.

With *gird* of the next line we are to understand *with mourning*.

- i. 13. *Gird ye, O priests, beat the breast,
Wail, O ministers of the altar,
Come ye, lie down in sackcloth,
O ye ministers of God¹ !
For cut off from the house of your God
Are the meal and drink offerings.*
14. *Hallow ye a fast,
Call an assembly,
Gather ye² all that dwell in the land
To the House of Yahweh your God,
And cry unto Yahweh,*
15. *Alas for the Day !
For near is the Day of Yahweh,
As vehemence from the Vehement³ it comes.*
16. *Is not our food cut off
From before our eyes ;
From the house of our God
Gladness and joy.*
17. *The grains have shrivelled away
Beneath their hoes (?)⁴
The garners are desolate,
The barns broken down,
Since the corn is withered.*

¹ So LXX and Vulg. Heb. *my God*.

² Heb. inserts *elders*, which may be taken as vocative, or with LXX as accusative, but after the latter we should expect *and*. Wellhausen suggests its deletion, and Nowack regards it as an intrusion. For אִנְכֶם Wellhausen reads אִנְכֶם, *be ye gathered*.

³ Keshōdh mishshaddhai (Isa. xiii. 6) ; Driver, *as overpowering from the Overpowerer*.

⁴ A.V. *clods*. מִנְרֶפוֹתֵיהֶם : the meaning is doubtful, but the corresponding Arabic word means *besom* or *shovel* or (*P.E.F.Q.*, 1891, p. 111, with plate) *hoe*, and the Aram. *shovel*. See Driver's note.

18. *What shall we put in them?*¹

*The herds of cattle huddle² together
For no pasture is theirs;
Yea the flocks of the sheep are forlorn³—*

19. *Unto Thee, O Yahweh, I⁴ call!*

*For fire has devoured
The pastures of the steppes,⁵
And the flame has scorched
All the trees of the field.*

*Even the beasts of the field
Are panting to Thee.
For the water beds are dried,
And fire has devoured the pastures.⁶*

With the close of ch. i, Joel's discourse takes pause, and in ch. ii he begins a second with another call to repentance in face of the same plague. The plague has progressed. The locusts are described in their invasion not of the country but of the towns, to which they pass after stripping the country. For the latter see pp. 393 f. The *horn* to be blown, ver. 1, is

¹ Reading, after LXX τί ἀποθήσομεν ἑαυτοῖς (probably an error for ἐν αὐτοῖς), מָה נִנְיָחָה בָהֶם (so too Bewer and A. R. Gordon) for the Massoretic מָה נִאֲנָחָה בָהֶם, *How the beasts sob!* to which A.V. and Driver adhere.

² Lit. *press themselves* in perplexity: cf. Ex. xiv. 3 of the confused Israelites.

³ Reading, with Wellhausen and Nowack ('perhaps rightly,' Driver) נִאֲשָׁמוּ נִאֲשָׁמוּ, *are guilty or punished*.

⁴ Sievers, Bewer, A. R. Gordon read *they*.

⁵ מִדְבָּר, usually rendered *wilderness or desert*, but literally *place where the sheep are driven*, land not cultivated. See *Hist. Geog.*, p. 656.

⁶ Heb. and versions add *of the steppes*, a repetition from above which overloads the line.

an *alarm horn*¹ to warn the people of the approach of the Day of the Lord, and not the Shophar which called the people to a general assembly, as in 15.

- ii. 1. *Blow ye a horn*¹ *in Şion,*
Sound the alarm on My Holy Mount.
All of you tremble that dwell in the land,
For the Day of Yahweh is coming,
Yea it is near.
2. *Day of darkness and murk,*
*Day of cloud and thick mist,*²
*Like dawn astrife*³ *on the mountains.*
A people many and powerful ;
Its like has not been from of old,
And shall not again be for years
Of generation to generation.
3. *Before it the fire devours,*⁴
And behind it the flame consumes.
*Like the garden of Eden*⁵ *the land is before it,*
And behind it a desolate desert ;
Yea, nothing it lets escape.
4. *Their visage is the visage of horses,*
And like horsemen they run.
5. *Like the noise of chariots they racket*
Over the tops of the mountains,
Like the sound of a flame of fire
Devouring stubble,
Like a powerful people,
Arrayed for battle.

¹ See Amos iii. 6 ; Vol. I, p. 80.

² Zeph. i. 15. See above, p. 57.

³ פֶּרֶשׁ in Qal to spread abroad, but the passive is here to be taken in the same sense as the Ni. in Ezek. xvii. 21, *dispersed*. The figure is of dawn struggling with a mass of cloud and expresses the gleams of white which break through a locust cloud. See pp. 391, 395.

⁴ So travellers have described the effect of locusts. See pp. 394 f.

⁵ Ezek. xxxvi. 35.

6. *Before them the peoples writhe,
All faces gather black fear.*
7. *Like warriors they run,
Like fighting-men they come up the wall ;
They march every man by himself,¹
And they ravel ² not their paths.*
8. *None jostles his comrade,
They march every man on his track,³
And plunge through the missiles unbroken.⁴*
9. *They scour through the city,
Run over the walls,
Climb into the houses,
Steal through the windows like thieves.⁵*
10. *Before them earth trembles,
Heaven is quaking,
The sun and the moon turn black,
And the stars draw in their shining.*
11. *Yahweh utters His Voice
In front of His Army,
Mighty great is His Host,
Powerful is He Who performs His Word,
For great is the Day of Yahweh
And terribly awful,
Who may abide it ? ⁶*

¹ Heb. *in his own ways*.

² יַעֲבֹטוּן, an impossible metaphor, so that most read יַעֲבֹתוּן, a root only in Micah vii. 3 (see Vol. I, p. 459), *to twist or tangle* ; but Wellhausen reads יַעֲבֹתוּן, *twist*, Eccles. vii. 13.

³ Heb. *highroad*, as if defined and heaped up for him alone.

⁴ See above, pp. 377 n., 393.

⁵ *Like thieves* Duhm and Bewer take as a gloss.

⁶ Zeph. i. 14 ; ' Malachi ' iii. 2.

- ii. 12. *Yet even now—the Rede of Yahweh—
Turn ye to Me with all your heart,
With fasting, with weeping and mourning.*
13. *Rend ye your hearts and not your garments,
And turn unto Yahweh your God :
For gracious is He and merciful,
Long-suffering and plenteous in love,
And relents of the evil.*
14. *Who knows but He will turn and relent,
And leave behind Him a blessing,
Meal and drink-offering
To Yahweh, your God.*
15. *Blow ye¹ a horn in Sion,
Hallow a fast, call the assembly !*
16. *Sweep in the people,
Hallow the congregation,
Gather the old,² sweep in the children,
Even the infants at breast,
The bridegroom come forth from his chamber,
And the bride from her bower.³*
17. *Between porch and altar let them weep,
The priests, the ministers of Yahweh
Saying, Spare, O Yahweh, Thy people,
Give not Thy heritage to dishonour,
To the mockery⁴ of the nations.
Why should they say in the nations,
Where is their God ?*

¹ Bewer and others point this and the following imperatives to ver. 17 as perfects.

² So (and not *the elders*) in contrast to *the children*.

³ *Canopy or pavilion*, the bridal tent.

⁴ לַמִּשְׁחָה, which may mean either *rule over them* or *mock them*, but the parallelism decides for the latter.

CHAPTER XXIX

PROSPERITY AND THE SPIRIT

JOEL II. 18-32 (Eng.; II. 18-III. Heb.)

THEN *Yahweh became jealous for His land, and took pity upon His people*—with these words Joel opens the second half of his book. Our Version renders them in the future, as the continuation of the prophet's discourse, which had threatened the Day of the Lord, urged the people to penitence, and now promises that their penitence shall be followed by the Lord's mercy. But such a rendering forces the grammar;¹ and the Revised Version is right in taking the verbs, as the most critics do, in the past. Joel's call to repentance has closed, and has been successful. The fast has been hallowed, the prayers are heard. Probably an interval has elapsed between vv. 17 and 18, but in any case,

¹ A.V., adhering to the Massoretic text, in which the verbs are pointed for the past, has taken them as instances of the prophetic perfect. But 'this is grammatically indefensible': Driver, *in loco*, *Heb. Tenses*, § 82, *Obs.* Calvin and others, who take the verbs of 18 as future, accept those of 19 as past and with it begin the narrative. But if God's answer to His people's prayer be in the past, so must His jealousy and pity. All these verbs are in the same sequence of time. Merx proposes to change the vowels of the verbs and turn them into futures. But see above, p. 387. Ver. 21 shows that Yahweh's action is past, and Nowack points out the unusual character of the construction that would follow from Merx's emendation. Ewald, Hitzig, Kuenen, W. R. Smith, Davidson, Robertson, Steiner, Wellhausen, Driver, Nowack, etc., take the verbs in the past.

the people having repented, no more is said of their need to do so, and instead we have from God promises, vv. 19-27, in answer to their cry for mercy. These promises relate to the physical calamity which has been suffered. God will destroy the locusts, still impending, and restore the years which His army has eaten. There follows in vv. 28-32 (Eng. ; Heb. ch. iii) the promise of an outpouring of the Spirit on Israel ; amid terrible manifestations in heaven and earth.

I. THE RETURN OF PROSPERITY (ii. 18-27)

- ii. 18. *Then Yahweh was zealous for His land,
And took pity upon His people.*
19. *And Yahweh answered His people saying,
Behold I am sending you corn,
And new wine and oil,
And your fill ye shall have of them,
And not again shall I make you
A reproach 'mong the nations.*
20. *And the Northern¹ far shall I set from you,
Thrust him to land barren and waste,
His van to the eastern sea,
And his rear to the western,²
Till the stench of him rises,³—
For he hath done arrogantly.⁴*

¹ This is scarcely a name for locusts, who, though they might reach Palestine from the N.E. in certain circumstances, came generally from E. and S.E. But see above, p. 388 : so Kuenen, Wellhausen, Nowack. W. R. Smith suggests the whole verse as an allegorising gloss. Hitzig thought of the locusts only, and rendered הצפוני ὁ τυφωνικός, Acts xxvii. 14 ; but this is not proved.

² Dead Sea (Zech. xiv. 8) and Mediterranean.

³ The construction shows that the preceding clause, ועלח באשו, is a gloss (Driver). Nowack gives the other clause as the gloss.

⁴ Lit. *greatly* ; Bewer, *I will do greatly*.

Locusts disappear with the suddenness with which they arrive. A wind springs up and they are gone.¹ Dead Sea and Mediterranean are at the extremes of the compass, but there is no reason to suppose that the prophet has abandoned the realism which has hitherto distinguished his treatment of the locusts. The plague covered the whole land, on whose high watershed the winds suddenly veer and change. The dispersion of the locusts upon the deserts and the opposite seas was possible at one and the same time. Jerome vouches for an instance in his own day. The other detail is also true to life. Jerome says that the beaches of the two seas were strewn with putrifying locusts, and Augustine² quotes heathen writers in evidence of masses of locusts, driven from Africa upon the sea, and cast up on the shore, which gave rise to a pestilence. 'The south and east winds,' says Volney of Syria, 'drive the clouds of locusts with violence into the Mediterranean and drown them in such quantities, that when their dead are cast on the shore they infect the air to a great distance.'³ The prophet continues, celebrating this destruction of the locusts as if it were already realised—*Yahweh hath done greatly*, ver. 21. That among the blessings he mentions a supply of rain proves we were right in interpreting him to have spoken of drought as accompanying the locusts.⁴

ii. 21. *Fear not, O Land ! Rejoice and be glad,
For greatly hath Yahweh done,*⁵

¹ Nah. iii. 17 ; Exod. x. 19.

² *De Civitate Dei*, III, 31.

³ I, 278, quoted by Pusey.

⁴ i. 17-20 : see above, p. 395.

⁵ Prophetic past : Driver ; but Marti denies this. Bewer transfers 21-24 till after 25, 26a.

ii. 22. *Fear not, O beasts of the field !*

*For the pastures of the steppes are springing
For the trees bear their fruit,
Fig-tree and vine are yielding their substance.*

23. *O sons of Sion exult*

And rejoice in Yahweh your God :

For He hath given you

The early rain in due measure.¹

And poured² upon you the winter rain³

And the latter rain as before.⁴

¹ Opinion is divided as to the meaning of this: לצדקה = *for righteousness*. A. Some take it as having a *moral* reference; and (1) this is so emphatic to some that they render the word for *early rain*, מורה, also *teacher* or *revealer*, in the latter sense. So (some applying it to the Messiah) Targum, Symmachus, Vulgate, *doctorem justitiæ*, some Jews, e.g., Rashi and Abarbanel, and moderns, e.g. (at opposite extremes) Pusey and Merx. But, as Calvin points out (another instance of his sanity, and refusal to be led by theological presuppositions: 'I do not love strained expositions'), this does not agree with the context, which speaks not of spiritual but of physical blessings. (2) Some, who take מורה as *early rain*, give לצדקה the meaning *for righteousness, ad justitiam*, in the sense that God will give the rain as a token of His righteousness, or in order to vindicate the people (Davidson, *Expositor*, 1888, I, p. 203 n.), in the sense in which צדקה is employed in Isa. xl. ff. (*Isaiah xl-lxvi*, Ch. XIV). Cf. Hosea x. 13, צדק; Vol. I, p. 314, n. 3. This is possible, in view of Israel having been made by their plagues a reproach among the heathen. Still, if Joel had intended this, he would have applied the phrase, not to the *early rain* only, but to the series of blessings by which the people were restored to their standing before God. B. It seems, therefore, right to take לצדקה in a physical sense, of the measure or quality of the *early rain*. So Calvin, *rain according to what is just or fit*; R.V. in *just measure*; Siegfried-Stade, *sufficient*. The root-meaning of צדק may be *according to norm* (cf. *Isaiah xl-lxvi*, p. 232), in that case *rain of normal quantity*. This suits the parallel in next clause: *as formerly*. In Himyaritic the word is applied to good harvests. A man prays to God for צדקם ואומר צדקם, *full or good harvests and fruits*: Corp. Inscr. Sem., Pars Quarta, Tomus I, No. 2, lin. 1-5; cf. the note.

² Driver, *in loco*.

³ Heb. also repeats here *early rain*, but redundantly.

⁴ בראשון, *in the first*. A.V. adds *month*. But LXX and Syr. read כראשונה, the correct reading, *as before* or *formerly*.

24. *And the threshing-floors fill with wheat,
And the vats stream over with wine and oil.*
25. *And I will restore you the years
Which the Swarmer has eaten,
The Lapper, Devourer and Shearer,
My great army I sent among you.*
26. *Ye shall eat and be full, and praise
The Name of Yahweh your God,
Who hath dealt so wondrously with you ;
And My folk be abashed nevermore.*
27. *Ye shall know I am in the midst of Israel,
That I am Yahweh your God and none else ,
And nevermore shall My folk be abashed.¹*

2. THE OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT

(ii. 28–32 Eng. ; iii. Heb.)

Upon these promises of physical blessing follows another of the pouring forth of the Spirit : by which Joel became the Prophet of Pentecost, and his book the best known among Christians.

When fertility has been restored, the seasons again run their normal courses, and the people eat and are full—*It shall come to pass after these things, I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh.* The order of events makes us question : does Joel mean to imply that physical prosperity must precede spiritual fulness ? It would be unfair to assert this without remembering what he understands by the physical blessings. To Joel these are the token that God has returned to His people. The drought and famine produced by the locusts were signs of His anger and His divorce of the land. The proofs that He has relented, and taken Israel back into a spiritual relation to Himself, can, therefore, from Joel's

¹ By some the last four lines are taken as a later insertion.

point of view, only be given by the healing of the people's wounds. In plenteous rains and full harvests God sets His seal to man's penitence. Rain and harvest are not merely physical benefits, but sacraments: signs that God has returned to His people, and that His zeal is again stirred on their behalf.¹ This has to be made clear before there can be talk of higher blessings. God has to return to His people and show His love for them before He pours His Spirit upon them. That is what Joel intends by the order he pursues, and not that a certain stage of physical comfort is indispensable to a high degree of spiritual feeling and experience. The early and latter rains, the fulness of corn, wine and oil, are as purely, though not so highly, religious to Joel as the phenomena of the Spirit in men.

But though that be an adequate answer to our question so far as Joel is concerned, it does not exhaust the question with regard to history in general. From Joel's standpoint physical blessings may have been as religious as spiritual; but we must go further and assert that for Joel's anticipation of the baptism of the Spirit by a return of prosperity there is an ethical reason and one permanently valid in history. A certain degree of prosperity is a condition of that universal and lavish exercise of the religious faculties, which Joel pictures under the pouring forth of God's Spirit.

Prophecy itself furnishes us with proofs of this. When did it most flourish in Israel? When had the Spirit of God most freedom in developing the intellectual and moral nature of Israel? Not when the nation was struggling with the conquest and settlement of the land, not when it was engaged with the embarrassments and privations of the Syrian wars; but an Amos,

a Hosea, an Isaiah came forth at the end of the long, peaceful and prosperous reigns of Jeroboam II and Uzziah. The intellectual strength and liberty of the great Prophet of the Exile, his deep insight into God's purposes and his large view of the future, had not been possible without the security and fair degree of prosperity of the Jews in Babylon, from among whom he wrote. In Haggai and Zechariah, on the other hand, who worked in the hunger-bitten colony of returned exiles, there was no such fulness of the Spirit. Prophecy, we saw,¹ was then starved by the poverty of the national life from which it rose. All this is explicable. When men are stunned by such a calamity as Joel describes, or when they are engrossed by the daily struggle with bitter enemies and bad seasons, they may feel the need of penitence and be able to speak with decision on the practical duty of the moment, to a degree not attainable in better days, but they lack the leisure, the freedom and the resources amid which their faculties of mind and soul can respond to the Spirit's influence.

Has it been otherwise in the history of Christianity? Our Lord found His first disciples, not in a hungry and ragged community, but amid the prosperity of Galilee. They left all to follow Him and achieved their ministry in poverty and persecution, but they brought to that ministry minds and bodies trained in a fertile land and by a fair commerce.² Paul sustained himself by the labour of his hands, but he was the child of a rich civilisation and citizen of a great empire. The Reformation was preceded by the Renaissance, and on the Continent drew its forces, not from the impoverished populations of Italy and Southern Austria, but from

¹ Above, pp. 188 f.

² Cf. *Hist. Geog.*, Ch. XXI, especially p. 463.

the civic and commercial centres of Germany. An acute historian, in his lectures on the *Economic Interpretation of History*,¹ observes that every religious revival in England has happened upon a basis of comparative prosperity. He has proved 'the opulence of Norfolk during the epoch of Lollardy,' and pointed out that 'the Puritan movement was essentially and originally one of the middle classes, of the traders in towns and of the farmers in the country'; that the religious state of the Church of England was never so low as among the beggarly clergy of the seventeenth and part of the eighteenth centuries; that the Non-conformist bodies who kept religion alive during this period were closely identified with the movements of trade and finance;² and that even Wesley's revival of religion among the labouring classes of England took place at a time when prices were lower than in the previous century, wages had risen and 'most labourers were small occupiers; there was therefore in the comparative plenty of the time an opening for a religious movement among the poor, and Wesley was equal to the occasion.' He might have added that the missionary movement of the nineteenth century is contemporaneous with the advance of our commerce and our empire.

On the whole, then, the witness of history is uniform. Poverty and persecution, *famine, nakedness, peril and sword*, put a keenness on the spirit of religion, while luxury rots its fibres; but a basis of prosperity is indispensable to social and religious reform, and God's Spirit finds course in communities of a degree of civilisation and freedom from sordidness.

¹ By Thorold Rogers, pp. 80 ff.

² *E.g.*, the Quakers and the Independents. The Independents of the seventeenth century 'were the founders of the Bank of England.'

We may draw a lesson for our own day. Joel predicts that, upon the new prosperity of his land, the humblest classes of society shall be permeated by the spirit of prophecy. Is it not part of the secret of the failure of Christianity to enlist large portions of our population, that the basis of their life is sordid and insecure? Have we not to learn from the prophets, that some amount of freedom in a people and of health are indispensable to a revival of religion? Lives which are strained and starved, passed in rank discomfort or grinding poverty, without the possibility of independence for the individual or of sacredness for the home, cannot be religious save in the most rudimentary sense of the word. For the revival of energetic religion among such lives we must wait for a better distribution, not of wealth, but of the means of comfort, leisure and security. When, to our penitence and our striving, God restores the years which the locust has eaten, when the plagues of some rich men's selfishness and the poverty of the very poor are lifted, then may we look for the fulfilment of Joel's prediction—*even on all the slaves and on the handmaidens will I pour out My Spirit in those days.*

The economic problem has also its place in the warfare for the kingdom of God.

- ii. 28. *And it shall be that after such things,
I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh ;
And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
Your old men shall dream dreams,
Your youths shall see visions :*
- 29. *And even on the slaves and handmaidens
In those days will I pour out My Spirit.*
- 30. *And I will set signs in heaven and on earth,
Blood and fire and pillars of smoke.*

- ii. 31. *The sun shall be turned to darkness,
And the moon into blood,
Before the coming of the Day of Yahweh,
The great and the terrible.*
32. *And it shall be that every one who calls
On Yahweh's Name shall be saved :
For on Mount Sion shall be the escaped,
As Yahweh hath spoken,
And in Jerusalem among the fugitives
Those whom Yahweh calleth.*

This prophecy divides into two—the outpouring of the Spirit, and the appearance of the Day of the Lord.

The Spirit of God is to be poured *on all flesh*, says the prophet. By this term, which is sometimes applied to all that breathes, and sometimes to mankind as a whole,¹ Joel means Israel only : the heathen are to be destroyed.² Nor did Peter, quoting the passage at Pentecost, mean more. He spoke to Jews and proselytes : *the promise is to you and your children, and to them that are afar* : it was not till later that he discovered that the Holy Ghost was granted to the Gentiles, and then he was unready for the revelation.³ But within Joel's Israel the operation of the Spirit was to be thorough and universal. All classes would be affected, so that the simplest and rudest would become prophets.

The limitation was thus not without its advantages. In the earlier stages of religions, it is impossible to be both extensive and intensive. With few exceptions, the Israel of Joel's time was narrow and exclusive, hating and hated by other peoples. Behind the Law it kept

¹ All living things. Gen. vi. 17, 19, etc. ; mankind, Isa. xl. 5, xlix. 26. See Driver's note.

² Next chapter.

³ Acts x. 45.

itself aloof. But without doing so, Israel could hardly have survived or prepared itself then for its influence on the world. Heathenism threatened it from all sides with insidious infections ; and there awaited it in the near future a more subtle and powerful means of disintegration. In the wake of Alexander's expeditions, Hellenism poured across the East. There was not a community nor a religion, save Israel's, which was not Hellenised. That Israel remained Israel, in spite of Greek arms and the Greek mind, was due to the legalism of Ezra and Nehemiah, and to what we call the narrow enthusiasm of Joel. The hearts which kept their passion so confined felt all the deeper for its limits. They would be satisfied with nothing less than the inspiration of every Israelite, the fulfilment of the prayer of Moses : *Would to God that all Yahweh's people were prophets !* And of itself this carries Joel's prediction to a wider fulfilment. A nation of prophets is meant for the world. But even the best of men do not see the full force of the truth God gives them, nor follow it to even its immediate consequences. Few prophets did so, and at first none of the apostles. Joel does not hesitate to say that the heathen shall be destroyed. He does not think of Israel's mission as foretold by the Second Isaiah ; nor of ' Malachi's ' vision of the heathen waiting upon Yahweh. But in the near future there was coming another prophet to carry Joel's doctrine to its full effect, to rescue the gospel of God's grace from the narrowness of legalism and the pressure of Apocalypse, and by the parable of Jonah, the type of the prophet nation, to show to Israel that God had granted the Gentiles also repentance unto life.

That it was the lurid clouds of Apocalypse which hemmed in our prophet's view is clear from the next

verses. They bring the manifestations of God's wrath in nature closely upon the outpouring of the Spirit: *the sun turned to darkness and the moon to blood, the great and terrible Day of the Lord*. Apocalypse must always paralyse the missionary energies of religion. Who can think of converting the world, when the world is about to be convulsed? There is only time for a remnant to be saved.

But when we are free of Apocalypse, as the Book of Jonah is, then we have time and space opened up, and the forces of such a prophecy of the Spirit as Joel has given burst their national confines, and are seen to be applicable to all mankind.

CHAPTER XXX

THE JUDGEMENT OF THE HEATHEN

JOEL III (Eng. ; IV. Heb.)

HITHERTO Joel has not spoken of the heathen, except to pray that God by His plagues will not give Israel to be mocked by them. But in the last chapter of his Book Israel's captivity to the heathen is taken for granted, and promise made that it will be removed and their land freed from the foreigner. Certain nations are singled out for judgement, described in the terms of Apocalypse ; and the Book closes with the vision of a supernatural fertility for the land.

It is another horizon and far different interests from those of the preceding chapter. Here for the first time we may suspect the unity of the Book, and listen to suggestions of another authorship than Joel's. But these cannot be regarded as conclusive. Every prophet, however national his interests, feels it his duty to express himself upon foreign peoples, and Joel may well have done so. Only, in that case, his last chapter was delivered by him at another time and in different circumstances from the rest of his prophecies. Chs. i-ii (Eng. ; i-iii Heb.) are complete in themselves. Ch. iii (Eng. ; iv Heb.) opens without connection of time or subject with the preceding.¹

¹ Driver's and Nowack's arguments for a connection are not conclusive. The reason Davidson gives is (p. 204) that the judgement of the heathen is an essential in the Day of Yahweh which does not make Joel's authorship of the last chapter certain, but only possible.

The time of the prophecy is a time when Israel's fortunes are at low ebb,¹ her sons scattered among the heathen, her land, in part at least, held by foreigners. But it appears (though this is not said, and must be inferred from the general proofs of a post-exilic date) that Jerusalem is inhabited. Nothing is said to imply that the city needs to be restored.²

All the heathen nations are to be brought for judgement into a valley, which the prophet calls first the Vale of Jehoshaphat and then Vale of Decision. The second name leads us to infer that the first, which means *Yahweh-judges*, is also symbolic. That is to say, the prophet does not single out a definite valley already called Jehoshaphat. In all probability he has in his mind's eye some vale in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, for since Ezekiel³ the judgement of the heathen in face of Jerusalem has been a feature in Israel's vision of the last things; and as no valley about that city lends itself to the picture of judgement so well as the valley of the Kidron with the slopes of Olivet, the name Jehoshaphat has naturally been applied to it.⁴ Certain nations are singled out by name. These are not Assyria and Babylon, which had long perished, nor the Samaritans, Moab and Ammon, which harassed the Jews in the early days of the Return from Babylon, but Tyre, Sidon, Philistia, Edom and Egypt. The crime of the first three is the robbery of Jewish treasures, not necessarily those of the Temple, and the selling of many Jews into slavery. The crime of

¹ The phrase of ver. 1, *when I turn again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem*, may be rendered *when I restore the fortunes of Israel*.

² See above, pp. 375, 379.

³ xxxviii.

⁴ Some have thought of Hinnom and some unnecessarily of the Vale of Berakhah, in which Jehoshaphat defeated Moab, Ammon and Edom (2 Chron. xx). See the writer's *Jerusalem*, I, 173.

Edom and Egypt is that they have shed the innocent blood of Jews. To what events these charges refer we have no means of knowing in our ignorance of Syrian history after Nehemiah. That the chapter has no explicit reference to the cruelties of Artaxerxes Ochus in 360 would seem to imply a date earlier than that year. But it is possible that ver. 17 refers to that, the prophet refraining from accusing the Persians for the reason that Israel was still under their rule.

Another feature is that the Phœnicians are accused of selling Jews to the sons of the Yevanîm, Ionians or Greeks.¹ The latter lie on the far horizon of the prophet,² and we know from classical writers that from the fifth century onwards Syrian slaves were brought to Greece. The other features of the chapter are borrowed from earlier prophets.

- iii. 1. *For, behold, in those days and that time,
When I turn the fortunes³ of Judah and Jerusalem,*
2. *I will also gather all nations,
And bring them down to the Vale of Jehoshaphat ;⁴
And enter there into judgement with them,
For My folk and My heritage Israel,
Whom they have scattered among the nations,
And My land have divided.*
3. *And for My folk they cast lots.⁵
They have given a boy for a harlot,⁶
And sold a girl for wine and drunk it.*
4. *And again, what mean ye for Me, Tyre and Sidon
And all Philistia's circuits ?⁷*

¹ See above, p. 375, nn. 2-4.

² Ver. 6b.

³ Or *bring again the captivity*.

⁴ *Yahweh-judges*. See previous page.

⁵ See above, Obadiah 11 and Nahum iii. 10.

⁶ בִּזְנוּנָה . Oort suggests בְּמִזְוֶן , *for food*.

⁷ Gelilôth, the plural feminine of Galilee—the *circuit* (of the Gentiles).

- iii. 4. *Is it deed of Mine that ye are repaying ?
Or do ye anything fresh to Me ?*¹
*Swiftly, speedily will I return
Your deed on your heads.*
5. *You who have taken My silver and My gold,
And My goodly jewels brought to your palaces.*
6. *The sons of Judah and the sons of Jerusalem
Ye have sold to the sons of the Greeks,
In order to set them far, far from their border.*
7. *Lo ! I will stir them up from the places
Whither ye sold them,
And return your deed on your heads.*
8. *I will sell your sons and your daughters
Into the hands of the sons of Judah,
And they shall sell them unto the Shebans,*²
To a nation far off ; so Yahweh hath spoken.
9. *Proclaim ye this among the nations,
Hallow a war, wake up the warriors,
Let all the fighting men muster and march.*³
- 10 *Beat into swords your ploughshares,
And your pruning-hooks into lances.
Let the weakling say, I am strong,
And the coward become a warrior.*⁴
11. *Hasten*⁵ *and come, all ye nations around,
And gather yourselves together.*

¹ Scil. *that I must repay.*

² LXX, *they shall give them into captivity.*

³ Technical use of עָלָה, to go up to war.

⁴ This line, not in Heb., is recovered from LXX of 116 : ὁπαὶς ἔστ' ἡ
ἡμαχτής, for which Heb. has *Thither bring down thy heroes, O Yahweh !*

⁵ עָשָׂה, not found elsewhere, but supposed to mean *gather*. Cf.
Zeph. ii. 1. Others read הָעָשָׂה, *hasten* (Driver) ; Wellhausen, עָשָׂה.

12. *Let the nations be roused and go up
To the Vale of Jehoshaphat,
For there will I sit to judge
All the nations around.*
13. *Put in the sickle,¹ for ripe is the harvest.
Come, get you down ; for the wine-press is full,
The vats overflow, great is their wickedness.*
14. *Multitudes, multitudes in the Vale of Decision !
For near is His day in the Vale of Decision.*
15. *Sun and moon turn black,
And the stars have withdrawn their shining.*
16. *Yahweh thunders from Sion,
From Jerusalem gives² forth His voice :
Heaven and earth are quaking.
But to His people Yahweh is a refuge,
And for a fortress to the sons of Israel.*
17. *And ye shall know that I am Yahweh your God,
Who dwell in Sion, the Mount of My holiness ;
Jerusalem shall be holy, and strangers
Shall never pass through her again.*
18. *And it shall be on that day
The mountains shall drip sweet wine,
And the hills be liquid with milk,
And all the channels of Judah be running with
water ;
A fountain shall spring from the house of Yahweh,
And shall water the Wady of Shittim.³*

¹ מַגֵּל, only here and in Jer. l. 16: other Heb. word for sickle, *hermesh* (Deut. xvi. 9, xxiii. 26).

² Driver, future.

³ Not the well-known scene of Israel's camp across Jordan, but some dry and desert valley near Jerusalem (so most). Nowack: the Wadi el Sant on the way to Askalon, but this did not need watering and is called the Vale of Elah.

- iii. 19. *Egypt shall be desolation,
And Edom a desert steppe,
For the outrage to the sons of Judah,
Because they shed innocent blood in their land.*
20. *But Judah shall be dwelt in for ever,
And Jerusalem for generation upon generation.
And I will avenge their blood¹ I have not avenged—
By² Yahweh who dwelleth in Sion.*

¹ Merx applies this to the Jews of the Messianic era. LXX read ἐκζητήσω = וְנִקְמָתִי. So Syr. Cf. 2 Kings ix. 7.

Steiner: *Shall I leave their blood unpunished? I will not leave it unpunished.* Nowack deems this unlikely, and suggests, *I will avenge their blood; I will not leave unpunished the shedders of it.*

² Heb. construction is found also in Hosea xii. 5 (Eng.; Heb. 6).

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROPHETS OF THE
GRECIAN PERIOD

(331 B.C. ONWARDS)

CHAPTER XXXI

ISRAEL AND THE GREEKS

A PART from the author of the tenth chapter of Genesis, who defines Yavan or Greece as the father of Elishah and Tarshish, of Kittim or Cyprus and Rodanim or Rhodes,¹ the first Hebrew writer to mention the Greeks is Ezekiel,² c. 580 B.C. He describes them as in commerce with the Phœnicians, who bought slaves from them. Even while Ezekiel wrote in Babylon, the Babylonians were in touch with the Ionian Greeks through the Lydians.³ The latter were overthrown by Cyrus about 545, and by the beginning of the next century the Persian lords of Israel were in close struggle with the Greeks for the supremacy of the world, and had virtually been defeated so far as concerned Europe, the west of Asia Minor, and the sovereignty of the Mediterranean and Black Seas. In 460 Athens sent an expedition to Egypt to assist a revolt against Persia, and even before this Greek fleets had scoured the Levant, and Greek soldiers, though in the pay of Persia, had trodden the soil of Syria. Still

¹ Gen. x. 2, 4. יָוָן, Yavan, is *Iafav*, or *Iaov*, the older form of the name of the Ionians, the first Greeks with whom Eastern peoples came into contact. They are perhaps named on the Tell-el-Amarna tablets as Yivana, serving 'in the country of Tyre' (c. 1400 B.C.); and on an inscription of Sargon (c. 709) Cyprus is Yâvanu.

² xxvii. 13.

³ *Isaiah* xl-lxxvi, pp. 110 ff., 128.

Joel, writing towards 400 B.C., mentions the Greeks¹ only as traders to whom the Phœnicians sold Jewish slaves; and in a prophecy which some take to be contemporary with Joel, Isaiah lxvi, the coasts of Greece are among the most distant of Gentile lands.² In 401 the younger Cyrus brought to the Euphrates against Artaxerxes Mnemon the ten thousand Greeks whom, after the battle of Cunaxa, Xenophon led to the Black Sea. For nearly seventy years thereafter Athenian trade slowly spread eastward, but nothing was yet done by Greece to advertise her to the peoples of Asia as a claimant for the world's throne. Then suddenly in 334 Alexander of Macedon crossed the Hellespont, spent a year in the conquest of Asia Minor, defeated Darius at Issus in 332, took Damascus, Tyre and Gaza, overran the Delta and founded Alexandria. In 331 he marched back over Syria, crossed the Euphrates, overthrew the Persian Empire on the field of Arbela, and for the next seven years till his death in 324 extended his conquests to the Oxus and the Indus. The story, that on his second passage of Syria

¹ iii. 6 (Eng. ; iv. 6 Heb.).

² The sense of distance between the peoples was mutual. Writing in the middle of the 5th century B.C., Herodotus heard of the Jews only as a people practising circumcision and defeated by Pharaoh Necho at Megiddo (II, 104, 159; see *Hist. Geog.*, p. 405 n.). He does not know them by name. The fragment of Chœrilos of Samos, from the end of the 5th century, which Josephus cites (*Contra Apionem*, I, 22) as a reference to the Jews, is probably of a people in Asia Minor. Even in the last half of the 4th century, before Alexander's campaigns, Aristotle knows of the Dead Sea only by a vague report (*Meteor.*, II, iii. 39). His pupil, Theophrastus (d. 287), names and describes the Jews (Porphyr, *de Abstinencia*, II, 26; Eusebius, *Prepar. Evang.*, IX, 2: cf. Josephus, *C. Apion.*, I, 22); and another pupil, Clearchus of Soli, records the mention by Aristotle of a travelled Jew of Cœle-Syria, but 'Greek in soul as in tongue,' whom meeting, the philosopher had learned that the Jews were descended from the philosophers of India (Josephus, *C. Apion.*, I, 22).

Alexander visited Jerusalem,¹ is probably false. But he must have encamped repeatedly within forty miles of it, and he visited Samaria.² It is impossible that he received no embassy from a people who had not known political independence for centuries and must have been ready to come to terms with the new lord of the world. Alexander left behind colonies of veterans both to the east and west of the Jordan, and in his wake there poured into the cities of the Syrian seaboard a volume of Greek immigration.³ It is from this time onward that we find in Greek writers the earliest mention of the Jews by name. Theophrastus and Clearchus of Soli, disciples of Aristotle, both speak of them; but while the former gives evidence of some knowledge of their habits, the latter reports that in the perspective of his great master they were so distant and vague as to be confounded with the Brahmins of India, a confusion which long survived among the Greeks.⁴

Alexander's death delivered his empire to the ambitions of his generals, of whom four contested the mastery of Asia and Egypt—Antigonus, Ptolemy, Lysimachus and Seleucus. Of these Ptolemy and Seleucus emerged victorious, the one in possession of Egypt, the other of Northern Syria and the rest of Asia. Palestine lay between them, and both in the wars which led to the establishment of the two kingdoms and in those which for centuries followed, Palestine became the battle-field of Greeks.

Ptolemy gained Egypt within two years of Alexander's death, and from its definite and entrenched territory he had by 320 conquered Syria and Cyprus. In 315 or 314 Syria was taken from him by Antigonus,

¹ Jos., XI *Ant.*, iv. 5.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 593 f.

³ *Hist. Geog.*, p. 347.

⁴ See note on previous page.

who also expelled Seleucus from Babylon. Seleucus fled to Egypt and stirred Ptolemy to the reconquest of Syria. In 312 Ptolemy defeated Demetrius, the general of Antigonus, at Gaza, but the next year was driven back into Egypt by Antigonus himself. Meanwhile Seleucus regained Babylon.¹ In 311 the three made peace, but Antigonus retained Syria. In 306 they assumed the title of kings, and the same year renewed their quarrel. After a naval battle Antigonus wrested Cyprus from Ptolemy, but in 301 was defeated and slain by Seleucus and Lysimachus at the battle of Ipsus in Phrygia. His son Demetrius retained Cyprus and part of the Phœnician coast till 287, when he was forced to yield them to Seleucus, who had moved the centre of his power from Babylon to the new Antioch on the Orontes, with a seaport at Seleucia. Meanwhile in 301 Ptolemy had regained what the Greeks then knew as Cœle-Syria, that is all Syria to the south of Lebanon, except the Phœnician coast.² Damascus belonged to Seleucus. But Ptolemy was not allowed to retain Palestine in peace, for in 297 Demetrius appears to have invaded it, and Seleucus, especially after his marriage with Stratonike, the daughter of Demetrius, never resigned his claims to it.³ Ptolemy, however, established a hold upon the land, which continued practically unbroken for a century, and yet all that time had to be maintained by frequent wars, from which the land must have suffered severely (264-248).

As in the days of their earliest prophets, the people of Israel once more lay between two rival empires. And as Hosea and Isaiah pictured them in the eighth century, the possible prey either of Egypt or Assyria,

¹ Hence the Seleucid era dates from 312. ² *Hist. Geog.*, p. 538.

³ Cf. Ewald, *Hist.* (Eng. Ed.), V. 226 f.

so now in these last years of the fourth they were tossed between Ptolemy and Antigonus, and in the opening years of the third equally wooed by Ptolemy and Seleucus. Upon this new alternative of tyranny the Jews appear to have bestowed the actual names of their old oppressors. Ptolemy was Egypt to them ; Seleucus, with one of his capitals at Babylon, was still Assyria, from which came in time the Greek form of Syria.¹ But, unlike the ancient empires, these new rival lords were of one race. Whether the tyranny came from Asia or Africa, its quality was Greek ; and in the sons of Yavan the Jews saw the successors of those world-powers of Egypt, Assyria and Babylonia, in which had been concentrated against them the whole force of the heathen world. Our records of the times are fragmentary, but though Alexander spared the Jews it appears that they had not long to wait before feeling the power of Greek arms. Josephus quotes² from Agatharchides of Cnidos (180-145 B.C.) to the effect that Ptolemy I surprised Jerusalem on a Sabbath day and easily took it ; and he adds that at the same time he took many captives from the hill-country of Judæa, from Jerusalem and

¹ Ashur or Assyria fell in 607, but her name was transferred to Babylon (2 Kings xxiii. 29 ; Jer. ii. 18 ; Lam. v. 6), and even to Babylon's successor Persia (Ezra vi. 22). When Seleucus secured virtually the old Assyrian Empire with extension to Phrygia and the Punjaub, the name would be continued to his dominion, especially as his first capital was Babylon, from his capture of which in 312 the Seleucid era started. There is record of this. Brugsch (*Gesch. Aeg.*, p. 218) states that in the hieroglyphs of the Ptolemæan period the Seleucid kingdom is called Asharu (cf. Stade, *Z.A.T.W.*, 1882, p. 292, and Cheyne, *Bk. of Psalms*, p. 253, and *Introd. to Bk. of Isaiah*, p. 107, n. 3). As that kingdom shrank to this side of the Euphrates, it drew the name Assyria with it. But in Greek this had long (cf. Herod) been shortened to Syria : Herodotus also appears to have applied it only to the W. of the Euphrates Cf. *Hist. Geog.*, pp. 3 f.

² XII, *Antt.* i : cf. *Con. Apion.*, I, 22.

Samaria, and led them into Egypt. Whether this was in 320 or 312 or 301¹ we cannot tell. It is possible that the Jews suffered in each of these invasions of Syria, as well as during the southward marches of Demetrius and Antigonus. The later policy, both of the Ptolemies, who were their lords, and of the Seleucids, was for long friendly to Israel. Their sufferings from the Greeks were probably over by 280, although they cannot have remained unscathed by the wars between 264 and 248.

The Greek invasion, however, was not of arms alone ; but of a force of intellect and culture surpassing even the influences which the Persians had impressed upon the religion and mental attitude of Israel. The ancient empires had transplanted the nations of Palestine to Assyria and Babylonia. The Greeks did not need to remove them to Greece ; for they brought Greece to Palestine. 'The Orient,' says Wellhausen, 'became their America.' They poured into Syria, infecting, exploiting, assimilating its peoples. With dismay the Jews saw themselves surrounded by Greek colonies, and still more by the old Palestinian cities Hellenised in polity and religion. The Greek translator of Isaiah ix. 12 renders Philistines by Hellenes. Israel were compassed and penetrated by influences as subtle as the atmosphere : not as of old uprooted from their fatherland, but with their fatherland itself infected and altered beyond all resistance. The full alarm of this, however, was not felt for years to come. At first the policy both of the Seleucids and the Ptolemies was to flatter and foster the Jews. They encouraged them to feel that their religion had its own place beside the forces of Greece, and was worth interpreting to the world.

¹ See above, pp. 431 f. Eusebius, *Chron. Arm.*, II, 225, assigns it to 320.

Seleucus I gave to Jews rights of citizenship in Asia Minor and Northern Syria ; and Ptolemy I atoned for previous violence by granting them the same in Alexandria. In the matter of the consequent tribute Seleucus respected their religious scruples ; and it was under Ptolemy Philadelphus (283-247), if not at his instigation, that the Law was translated into Greek.

To prophecy, before it expired, there was granted the opportunity to assert itself, upon at least the threshold of this new era of Israel's history.

We have from the first half-century of the era perhaps three or four, but certainly two, prophetic pieces. By many critics Isaiah xxiv-xxvii are assigned to the years immediately following Alexander's campaigns. Others assign Isaiah xix. 16-25 to the last years of Ptolemy I.¹ And of our Book of the Twelve Prophets, the chapters attached to the genuine prophecies of Zechariah, or chaps. ix-xiv of his Book, probably fall to be dated from the contests of Syria and Egypt for Palestine ; while somewhere about 300 is the most likely date for the Book of Jonah.

In 'Zech.' ix-xiv we see prophecy perhaps at its lowest ebb. The clash with the new foes produces a terrible thirst for the blood of the heathen : there are schisms and intrigues within Israel which in our ignorance of her history during this time it is not possible to follow : the bright gleams, which contrast forcibly with the rest, may be older oracles that the writer has incorporated with his own dark Apocalypse.

In the Book of Jonah, on the other hand, we find a spirit and a style in which prophecy may not unjustly be said to have given its highest utterance.

¹ Cheyne, *Introd. to Book of Isaiah*, p. 105.

And this alone suffices, in our uncertainty as to the date of the book, to take it last of all our Twelve. For 'in this book,' as Cornill has finely said, 'the prophecy of Israel quits the scene of battle as victor, and as victor in its severest struggle—that against self.'

'ZECHARIAH'

(IX-XIV)

Lo, thy King cometh to thee, vindicated and victorious, meek and riding on an ass, and on a colt, the foal of an ass.

Up, Sword, against My Shepherd ! . . . Smite the Shepherd, that the sheep may be scattered !

And I will pour upon the house of David and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplication, and they shall look to Him whom they have pierced ; and they shall lament for Him, as with lamentation for an only son, and bitterly grieve for Him, as with grief for a first-born.

CHAPTER XXXII

CHAPTERS IX-XIV OF 'ZECHARIAH'

WE saw that the first eight chapters of the Book of Zechariah were, save a few verses, from the prophet himself. No one has doubted this. No one could doubt it: they are obviously from the years of the building of the Temple, 520-516 B.C. They hang together with a consistency exhibited by few groups of chapters in the old Testament.

But when we pass into ch. ix we find circumstances and an atmosphere altogether different. Israel is upon a new situation of history, and the words addressed to her breathe another spirit. There is not the faintest allusion to the building of the Temple—the subject on which the first eight chapters depend. There is not a single certain reflection of the Persian period, under the shadow of which the first eight chapters were evidently written. Names of heathen powers are mentioned, which not only do not occur in the first eight chapters, but of which it is not possible to think that they had any interest whatever for Israel between 520 and 516: Damascus, Hadrach, Hamath, Assyria, Egypt and Greece. The peace, and the love of peace, in which Zechariah wrote, has disappeared.¹ Nearly everything breathes war actual or imminent. The

¹ Except in the passage ix. 10-12, which seems strangely out of place in the rest of ix-xiv.

heathen are spoken of with a ferocity which finds few parallels in the Old Testament. There is a revelling in their blood, of which the student of the authentic prophecies of Zechariah will at once perceive that lover of peace was not capable. And one passage figures the imminence of a thorough judgement upon Jerusalem, very different from Zechariah's outlook upon his people's future from the eve of the completion of the Temple. It is not surprising that one of the earliest efforts of Old Testament criticism should have been to prove another author than Zechariah for chs. ix-xiv of the book called by his name.

The first attempt was made so far back as 1632 by the Cambridge theologian Joseph Mede,¹ who was moved thereto by the desire to vindicate the correctness of St. Matthew's ascription² of 'Zech.' xi. 13 to Jeremiah. Mede's effort was developed by other English exegetes. Hammond assigned chs. x-xii, Bishop Kidder³ and William Whiston, the translator of Josephus, ix-xiv, to Jeremiah. Archbishop Newcome⁴ divided them, and sought to prove that while ix-xi must have been written before 721, or a century earlier than Jeremiah, because of the heathen powers they name, and the divisions between Judah and Israel, xii-xiv reflect the imminence of the Fall of Jerusalem. In 1784 Flügge⁵ offered independent argument that ix-xiv were by Jeremiah; and in 1814 Bertholdt⁶ suggested that ix-xi might be by Zechariah the contemporary of Isaiah,⁷ and on that account attached to the prophecies of his younger namesake. These opinions gave the trend to the main volume of criticism, which, till about 1880, deemed 'Zech.' ix-xiv to be pre-exilic. So Hitzig, who at first took the whole to be from one hand, but afterwards placed xii-xiv

¹ *Works*, 4th ed., 1677, pp. 786 ff., 834. Mede died 1638.

² Matt. xxvii. 9.

³ *Demonstration of the Messias*, 1700.

⁴ *An Attempt towards an Improved Version of the Twelve Minor Prophets*, 1785 (not seen). See also Wright on Archbishop Secker.

⁵ *Die Weissagungen, welche bei den Schriften des Proph. Sacharja beygebogen sind, übersetzt*, etc., Hamburg (not seen).

⁶ *Einleitung in A u. N.T.* (not seen).

⁷ Isa. viii. 2. See above, p. 260, n. 1.

by a different author under Manasseh. So Ewald, Bleek, Kuenen (at first), Samuel Davidson, Schrader, Duhm (in 1875), König and Orelli, who assign ix-xi to the reign of Abaz, but xii-xiv to the eve of the Fall of Jerusalem, or a little later.

Some critics, however, were unmoved by the evidence offered for a pre-exilic date. They pointed out that the geographical references were equally suitable to the centuries after the Exile. Damascus, Hadrach and Hamath,¹ though politically obsolete by 720, entered history again with the campaigns of Alexander in 332-331, and the establishment of the Seleucid kingdom in Northern Syria.² Egypt and Assyria³ were names used after the Exile for the kingdom of the Ptolemies, and for those powers which still threatened Israel from the north, or Assyrian quarter. Judah and Joseph or Ephraim⁴ were names still used after the Exile to express the whole of God's Israel; and in chs. ix-xiv they are not divided as before 721, but united. None of the chapters give any hint of a king in Jerusalem; and all, while representing the great Exile of Judah as begun, show a dependence in style and even in language upon Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Isaiah xl-lxvi. Moreover, the language is post-exilic, sprinkled with Aramaisms and other words and phrases used only, or mainly, by Hebrew writers from Jeremiah onwards.

But though many critics judged these grounds to be sufficient to prove the post-exilic origin of 'Zech.' ix-xiv, they differed as to the author and exact date of these chapters. Conservatives like Hengstenberg,⁵ Delitzsch, Keil, Köhler and Pusey used the evidence to prove the authorship of Zechariah himself after 516, and interpreted the references to the Greek period as prediction. Pusey says⁶ that ix-xi extend from the completion of the Temple and its deliverance during the invasion of Alexander, and from the victories of the Maccabees, to the rejection of the true shepherd and the curse upon the false; and xi-xii 'from a future repentance for the death of Christ to the final conversion of the Jews and Gentiles.'⁷

But on the same grounds Eichhorn⁸ saw in the chapters no prediction but a reflection of the Greek period. He assigned

¹ ix. 1 f.

² See above, Ch. XXXI.

³ x. 10.

⁴ ix. 10, 13, etc.

⁵ *Dan. u. Scharja.*

⁶ Page 503.

⁷ See Addenda, p. 462.

⁸ *Einl.* in the beginning of the nineteenth century.

ix and x to an author under Alexander ; xi-xiii. 6 he placed a little later, and xiii. 7-xiv in Maccabean times. Böttcher¹ placed the whole in the wars of Ptolemy and Seleucus ; and Vatke, who first selected a date in the reign of Artaxerxes Longhand, 464-425, finally decided for the Maccabean period, 170 ff.²

In recent times the most thorough examination of the chapters has been that by Stade,³ and the conclusion he comes to is that chs. ix-xiv are all from one author, who must have written during the early wars between the Ptolemies and Seleucids about 280 B.C., but employed, especially in chs. ix, x, an earlier prophecy. A criticism and modification of Stade's theory is given by Kuenen. He allows that the present form of ix-xiv must be of post-exilic origin : this is obvious from the mention of the Greeks as a world-power ; the description of a siege of Jerusalem by *all* the heathen ; the way in which (ix. 11 f., but especially x. 6-9) the captivity is presupposed, if not of all Israel, yet of Ephraim ; the fact that the House of David are not represented as governing ; and the priestly character of the chapters. But Kuenen holds that a prophecy of the eighth century underlies chs. ix-xi, xiii. 7-9, in which several actual phrases of it survive ;⁴ and that in their present form xii-xiv are older than ix-xi, and probably by a contemporary of Joel, about 400 B.C.

In the main Cheyne,⁵ Cornill,⁶ Wildeboer⁷ and Staerk⁸ adhere to Stade's conclusions. Cheyne proves

¹ *Neue Exeg. krit. Aehrenlese z. A.T.*, 1864.

² *Einl.*, 1882, p. 709.

³ *Z.A.T.W.*, 1881, 1882. See further proof of the late character of language and style, and of the unity, by Eckardt, *Z.A.T.W.*, 1893, pp. 76 ff.

⁴ § 81, n. 3, 10. See p. 457, end of note 2.

⁵ *Jewish Quart. Review*, 1889.

⁶ *Einl.*⁴.

⁷ *A.T. Litt.*

⁸ *Untersuchung über die Komposition u. Abfassungszeit von Zach.*, 9-14, etc. Halle, 1891 (not seen).

the unity of the six chapters and their date *before* the Maccabean period. Staerk brings down xi. 4-17 and xiii. 7-9 to 171 B.C. Wellhausen argues for the unity, and assigns it to the Maccabean times. Driver judges ix-xi, with its natural continuation, xiii. 7-9, as not earlier than 333; and the rest of xii-xiv as certainly post-exilic, and probably from 432-300. Rubinkam¹ places ix. 1-10 in Alexander's time, the rest in that of the Maccabees, but Zeydner² all of it in the latter. Kirkpatrick,³ after showing the post-exilic character of all the chapters, favours assigning ix-xi to a different author from xii-xiv. Asserting that it is impossible to fix the exact date, he thinks that the whole may be with probability assigned to the first sixty or seventy years of the Exile, and is therefore in its proper place between Zechariah and 'Malachi.' The reference to the sons of Yavan he takes as a gloss, probably added in Maccabean times.⁴

It will be seen from this catalogue of conclusions that the prevailing trend of recent criticism has been to assign 'Zech.' ix-xiv to post-exilic times, and to a different author from i-viii; and that while a few critics maintain a date soon after the Return, the most are divided between the years following Alexander's campaigns and the time of the Maccabean struggles.⁵

In more recent years are only two attempts to support the position of Pusey and Hengstenberg that the whole Book is a genuine work of Zechariah the son of Iddo. One of these is by C. H. H. Wright in his Bampton Lectures. The other is by George L. Robinson, in a reprint (1896) from the *American Journal of*

¹ 1892: quoted by Wildeboer.

² 1893: quoted by Wildeboer.

³ *Doctrine of the Prophets*, 438 ff., in which the English reader will find a lucid and fair treatment of the question. See, too, Wright.

⁴ Page 472, Note A.

⁵ Kautzsch—the Greek period.

Semitic Languages and Literatures, which offers a history of the discussion of the whole question from the days of Mede, with a careful argument of the evidence on both sides. The conclusion is reached that the chapters reflect the history of the years 518-516 B.C.

In discussing the question, for which our treatment of other prophets has left us little space, we need not open that part of it which lies between a pre-exilic and a post-exilic date. Criticism of all schools and at both extremes has tended to establish the latter upon reasons we have already stated,¹ for further details of which the student is referred to Stade's and Eckardt's investigations,² and Kirkpatrick's summary. There remain the questions of the unity of chs. ix-xiv; their exact date or dates after the Exile, and as a consequence of this their relation to the authentic prophecies of Zechariah in chs. i-viii.

On the question of unity we take first ix-xi, to which must be added (as by most since Ewald) xiii. 7-9, which has got out of its place as the natural continuation and conclusion of ch. xi.

Ch. ix. 1-8 predicts the overthrow of heathen neighbours of Israel, their possession by Yahweh and His safeguard of Jerusalem. Vv. 9-12 follow with a prediction of the Messianic King as the Prince of Peace; then come vv. 13-17, with no mention of the King, but Yahweh appears alone as the hero of His people against the Greeks, and there is indeed sufficiency of war and blood. Ch. x makes a new start: the people are warned to seek their blessings from Yahweh and not from Teraphim and diviners, whom their false shepherds follow. Yahweh, visiting His flock, shall punish these, give proper rulers, make the people strong

¹ Above, pp. 441 f.

² *Z.A.T.W.*, 1881-82, 1893.

and gather in their exiles to fill Gilead and Lebanon. Ch. xi opens with a burst of war on Lebanon and Bashan and the overthrow of the heathen (1-3), and follows with an allegory, in which the prophet first receives from Yahweh charge of the people as their shepherd, but is contemptuously treated by them (4-14), and taking the guise of an evil shepherd represents what they must suffer from their next ruler (15-17). This tyrant, however, shall receive punishment, two-thirds of the nation shall be scattered, but the rest, purified, shall be God's own people (xiii. 7-9).

In the course of this prophesying there is no conclusive proof of a double authorship. The only passage which offers evidence for this is ch. ix. The verses predicting the peaceful coming of Messiah (9-12) do not accord in spirit with those which follow predicting the appearance of Yahweh with war and shedding of blood. Nor is the difference altogether explained, as Stade thinks, by the similar order of events in ch. x, where Judah and Joseph are first represented as saved and brought back in ver. 6, and then the process of their redemption and return is described in vv. 7 ff. Why did the same writer give statements of such different temper as ix. 9-12 and 13-17? Or, if these be from different hands, why were they ever put together? Otherwise there is no reason for breaking up ix-xi, xiii. 7-9. Rubinkam, who separates ix. 1-10 by a hundred and fifty years from the rest; Bleek, who divides ix from x; and Staerk, who separates ix-xi. 3 from the rest, have been answered by Robinson and others.¹ On the ground of language, grammar and syntax, Eckardt has proved that ix-xi are from the same author of a late date, who, however, may have

¹ Robinson, pp. 76 ff.

occasionally followed earlier models and even introduced their phrases.¹

More supporters have been found for a division of authorship between chs. ix–xi, xiii. 7–9, and xii–xiv (less xiii. 7–9). Ch. xii opens with a title of its own. A strange element is introduced into the historical relation. Jerusalem is assaulted not by the heathen only, but by Judah, who, however, turns on finding that Yahweh fights for Jerusalem, and is saved by Yahweh before Jerusalem, that the latter may not boast over it (xii. 1–9). A spirit of grace and supplication is poured upon the guilty city, a fountain opened for uncleanness, idols abolished, and the prophets, who are put on a level with them, abolished too, where they do not disown their profession (xii. 10–xiii. 6). Another assault of the heathen on Jerusalem is described, half the people being taken captive. Yahweh appears, and by an earthquake saves the rest. The land is transformed. Then the prophet goes back to the defeat of the heathen assault on the city, in which Judah is again described as taking part; and the surviving heathen are converted, or, if they refuse to be, punished by the withholding of rain. Jerusalem is holy to the Lord (xiv). In all this there is more that differs from chs. ix–xi, xiii. 7–9, than the strange opposition of Judah and Jerusalem. Ephraim, or Joseph, is not mentioned, nor any return of exiles, nor punishment of the shepherds, nor coming of the Messiah,² the latter's place being taken by Yahweh. But in answer to this we may remember that the Messiah, after being described in ix. 9–12, is immediately lost

¹ *Z.A.T.W.*, 1893, 76 ff. See also the summaries of linguistic evidence by Robinson. Kuenen finds in ix–xi the following pre-exilic elements: ix. 1–5, 8–10, 13a (?); x. 1 f., 10 f.; xi. 4–14 or 17.

behind the warlike coming of Yahweh. Both sections speak of idolatry, and of the heathen, their punishment and conversion, and do so in the apocalyptic style. Nor does the language of the two differ decisively. On the contrary, as Eckardt¹ and Kuiper have shown, the language is on the whole an argument for unity of authorship.² There is, then, nothing conclusive against the position, which Stade laid down and fortified, that ix-xiv are from the same hand, although, as he admits, this cannot be proved with certainty. So Cheyne: 'With perhaps one or two exceptions, ix-xi and xii-xiv are so closely welded that even analysis is impossible.'³

The next questions are whether ix-xiv offer evidence of being by Zechariah, the author of i-viii, and if not to what other date they may be assigned.

It must be admitted that in language and in style the two parts of the Book of Zechariah have features in common. But that these are exaggerated by defenders of the unity there is no doubt. We cannot infer anything from the fact⁴ that both parts contain specimens of clumsy diction, of the repetition of the same word, of phrases (not the same phrases) unused by other writers; ⁵ or that each is lavish in vocatives; or that each is variable in its spelling. Resemblances of that kind they share with other books: some are due to the fact that both sections are post-exilic. On the other hand, as Eckardt has shown, there exists a greater number of differences between the two sections, in language and in style.⁶ Not only do characteristic

¹ See above, pp. 444 f.

² See also Robinson.

³ *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 1889, p. 81.

⁴ As Robinson, *e.g.*, does.

⁵ *E.g.*, *holy land*, ii. 16, and *Mount of Olives*, xiv. 4.

⁶ *Op. cit.*, 103-109: cf. Driver, *Introd.*⁶, 354.

words occur in each not found in the other, not only do ix-xiv contain more Aramaisms than i-viii, and so symptoms of a later date ; but both parts use the same words with different meanings, and apply different terms to the same objects. There are also differences of grammar, of formulas, and of other features of the phraseology, which complete the proof of a distinction of dialect so great as to imply distinction of authorship.

This impression is sustained by the contrast of the historical circumstances reflected in each of the two sections. Zech. i-viii were written during the building of the Temple. There is no echo of the latter in 'Zech.' ix-xiv. . Zech. i-viii picture the whole earth as at peace, which was true at least of all Syria : they portend no danger to Jerusalem from the heathen, but describe her peace and expansion in terms suitable to the circumstances imposed upon her by the clement policy of the earlier Persian kings. This is all changed in 'Zech.' ix-xiv. The nations are restless ; a siege of Jerusalem is imminent, and her salvation is to be assured only by war and shedding of blood. We know exactly how Israel fared and felt in the early sections of the Persian period : her interests in the politics of the world, her feelings towards her governors and her whole attitude to the heathen were not at that time those reflected in 'Zech.' ix-xiv.

Nor is there such resemblance between the principles of the two sections of the Book as could prove identity of origin. That both are spiritual, or have a similar expectation of the ultimate position of Israel in history, proves only that both were late offshoots from the same religious development, and worked on the same models. Within these outlines, there are not a few divergences. Zech. i-viii were written before Ezra and Nehemiah had imposed the Levitical legislation upon Israel ; but

Eckardt has shown the dependence on the latter of ix-xiv.

We may, therefore, adhere to Driver's assertion, that Zechariah in chs. i-viii 'uses a different phraseology, evinces different interests and moves in a different circle of ideas from those which prevail in chs. ix-xiv.'¹ Criticism has been justified in separating the two sections. This was one of the earliest results which modern criticism achieved, and the latest researches have but established it more firmly.

If, then, chs. ix-xiv be not Zechariah's, to what date may we assign them? We have seen that they bear evidence of being later than Zechariah, though they seem to contain earlier fragments. Perhaps this is all we can affirm. Yet something more definite is probable. The mention of the Greeks, not as Joel mentions them about 400, the most distant nation to which Jewish slaves could be carried, but as the chief heathen power, and a foe with whom the Jews are in touch and must soon cross swords,² appears to imply that the Syrian campaign of Alexander is happening or has happened, or even that the Greek kingdoms of Syria and Egypt are already contending for the possession of Palestine. With this agrees the mention of Damascus, Hadrach and Hamath, the localities where the Seleucids had their chief seats.³ In that case Ashur would signify the Seleucids and Egypt the Ptolemies:⁴ it is these, and not Greece, from whom the Jewish exiles have still to be redeemed. This makes probable the date which Stade proposed, between 300 and 280 B.C. To bring this further down, to the time of the Maccabees, as some have tried, is not impossible so far as the historical allusions are concerned; but

¹ *Introd.*⁶, p. 354.

² ix. 1 f.

³ ix. 13.

⁴ x. 10 f. See above, p. 441.

had the chapters been of so late a date, 170 or 160, we may doubt if they could have found a place in the prophetic canon, which was closed by 200, but they must have fallen with Daniel into the Hagiographa.

The appearance of these prophecies at the close of the Book of Zechariah has been explained, not quite satisfactorily, as follows. With the Book of 'Malachi' they formed originally three anonymous pieces,¹ which because of their anonymity were set at the end of the Book of the Twelve. The first of them begins with the very peculiar construction 'Massa' Dēbar Yahweh, 'oracle of the word of Yahweh, which, though partly belonging to the text, the editor read as a title, and attached as a title to each of the others. It occurs nowhere else. The Book of 'Malachi' was too distinct in character to be attached to another book, and soon came to have the supposed name of its author added to its title.² But the other two pieces fell, like all anonymous works, to the nearest writing with an author's name. Perhaps the attachment was hastened by the desire to make the round number of Twelve Prophets.

ADDENDA.

Whiston's work (p. 440) is *An Essay towards restoring the True Text of the O.T. and for vindicating the Citations made thence in the N.T.*, 1722, pp. 93 ff. (not seen). Besides those mentioned on p. 443 as supporting the unity of Zechariah, there ought to be named De Wette, Umbreit, von Hoffmann, Ebrard, etc. Kuiper's work (above p. 447) is *Zacharia 9-14*, Utrecht, 1894 (not seen). Nowack's conclusions are: ix-xi. 3 date from the Greek period (we cannot date them more exactly, unless ix. 8 refers to Ptolemy's capture of Jerusalem in 320);

¹ See above, pp. 323 ff., for proof of the original anonymity of the Book of 'Malachi.'

² Above, p. 323.

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xi. 4 ff., xiii. 7-9, are post-exilic; xii-xiii. 6 long after Exile; xiv long after Exile, later than 'Malachi.' Marti says the unity of ix-xiv is not to be doubted, and finds all its allusions and reflections to suit a date about 160 B.C. Duhm thinks that xi. 15-17, xiii. 7 deal with the high-priest Alkimus, the rest is somewhat later. Budde finds it more advisable to stand for a date in the fourth century. Sellin brings the whole down to 200 B.C.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE CONTENTS OF 'ZECHARIAH' IX-XIV

FROM the number of opinions which prevail, we have seen it impossible to decide on a scheme of division for 'Zech.' ix-xiv. These chapters are a number of oracles, which their language and general conceptions lead us to believe were put together by one hand, and which, with the possible exception of older fragments, reflect the times in Palestine that followed the invasion of Alexander. But though the most are probably due to one date and possibly from one author, these oracles do not always exhibit a connection, and sometimes show no relevance to each other. It will be simplest to take them piece by piece, and, before giving the translation of each, to explain its difficulties and indicate the ruling ideas.

I. THE COMING OF THE GREEKS (ix. 1-8)

This passage runs in the style of the early prophets. It figures the progress of war from north Syria by the valley of the Orontes to Damascus, and along the coasts of Phœnicia and Philistia. These shall be devastated, but Yahweh will camp about His House, it shall be inviolate. This is how Amos or Isaiah might have pictured an Assyrian campaign, or Zephaniah a Scythian. It is not surprising, therefore, that even some who take the bulk of 'Zech.' ix-xiv as post-exilic regard ix. 1-5

as earlier than Amos, with post-exilic additions in vv. 6-8.¹ This is possible. Vv. 6-8 are post-exilic, because of their mention of the half-breeds, and intimation that Yahweh will take unclean food out of the mouth of the heathen; but the allusions in vv. 1-5 suit an early date. They equally suit a date in the Greek period. The progress of war from the Orontes valley by Damascus and thence down the coast of Palestine follows the line of Alexander's campaign in 332, which must also have been that of Demetrius in 315 and of Antigonos in 311. The evidence of language is in favour of a late date.² If Ptolemy I took Jerusalem in 320,³ the promise, no assailant shall return (ver. 8), is probably later.

In face then of Alexander's invasion or of other campaigns on the same line, this oracle repeats the confidence of Isaiah. God rules: His providence is awake. *Yahweh hath an eye for mankind, and all the tribes of Israel.*⁴ The heathen shall be destroyed, Jerusalem rest secure; with a remnant of heathen converted, according to the Levitical notion, by having unclean foods taken out of their mouths.

Oracle

ix. 1. *Yahweh's Word* ⁵ *on the land of Hadrach,*
*And Damascus its goal,*⁶

¹ So Staerk, who thinks Amos I made use of vv. 1-5.

² ix. 1, אדם, *mankind*, in contrast to the tribes of Israel; 3, חרוץ, *gold*; 5, ישב as passive, cf. xii. 6; דורבש, Hi. of בוש, in passive sense only after Jeremiah (cf. above, p. 403, on Joel); in 2 Sam xix. 6, Hosea ii. 7, it is active.

³ See pp. 433 f.

⁴ ix. 1, but see p. 454.

⁵ Some take *Word* with *Oracle* as part of the title, leaving *Yahweh is in the land of Hadrach*.

⁶ Heb. *resting-place*, cf. Zech. vi. 8, *bring mine anger to rest*. This meets the objection of Bredenkamp that מנוחה is used of Yahweh alone.

ix. 1. *For Yahweh's are the towns of Aram,¹
As all the tribes of Israel,*

2. *And Hamath too that borders upon it,
Tyre and Sidon be they ever so wise.²*

3. *Tyre has built her a fortress,
And heaped up silver like dust
And gold like the dirt of the streets.*

4. *Lo, the Lord will dispossess her,
Strike into the sea her rampart,³
And by fire she shall be consumed.*

5. *Ashkelon shall see and be terrified,
Gaza shall writhe in anguish
And Ekron her trust ⁴ is abashed.
And the king shall perish from Gaza,
And Ashkelon never be dwelt in,*

6. *And half-breeds ⁵ shall dwell in Ashdod.*

I will cut down the pride of the Philistines,

7. *And take their blood from their mouth,
And their horrible things from between their teeth.⁶
Even they shall be left for our God
And be like a clan in Judah
And the people of Ekron like Jebusites.*

¹ For Heb. עֵין אָדָם, *eye of man* (!) read עָרֵי אֲדָם. Klostermann, *Thes. Litt. Zeit.*, 1879, 566 (quoted by Nowack), *Yahweh's are the cities of the heathen*. For אָדָם, *mankind* = *heathen*, cf. Jer. xxxii. 20.

² So LXX: Heb. has verb in sing.

³ Cf. Nahum iii. 8; Isa. xxvi. 1.

⁴ Read מִבְטָחָהּ.

⁵ Deut. xxiii. 3 (Heb., 2 Eng.).

⁶ The prepositions refer to the half-breeds. Ezekiel uses the term *to eat upon the blood*, i.e., meat eaten without being ritually slain, for illegal sacrifices (xxxiii. 25: cf. 1 Sam. xiv. 32 f.; Lev. xix. 26, xvii. 11-14). The Philistines in slaying a victim did not let the blood flow away.

8. *I will camp for a guard¹ to My House,
So that none pass through nor return,
No assailant again pass upon them,
For now I watch it Myself.²*

2. THE PRINCE OF PEACE (ix. 9-12)

This beautiful picture, applied by the Evangelist to our Lord upon His entry to Jerusalem, must also be post-exilic. It contrasts with the warlike portraits of the Messiah in pre-exilic times, for it clothes Him with humility and with peace. The coming King of Israel has the attributes already imputed to the Servant of the Lord by the prophet of the Exile. The next verses also imply the Exile as already a fact. On the whole, too, the language is late rather than early.³ Nothing in the passage betrays the exact point of its origin after the Exile.

The epithets applied to the Messiah are of great interest. He does not bring victory or salvation, but is the passive recipient of it.⁴ This determines the meaning of the preceding adjective, *righteous*, which has not the moral sense of *justice*, but that of *vindication*, in which *righteousness* and *righteous* are frequently used in Isa. xl-lv.⁵ He is *lowly*, like the Servant of the Lord; and rides not the horse, an animal for war, because the

¹ מַצֵּבָה for מִן-מַצֵּבָה; emend מַצֵּבָה, 1 Sam. xiv. 12, a *military post*. Ewald, מַצֵּבָה, *rampart*; LXX, ἀνδραγαθία = מַצֵּבָה.

² Lit. *see it with mine own eyes*. Do the preceding two lines refer to the profanation of the Temple by the Syrians?

³ ix. 10, מִשָּׁל, cf. Dan. xi. 4; אֶפְסִי אֶרֶץ only in late writings (unless Deut. xxxiii. 17 be early)—see Eckardt, p. 80; 12, בְּצִרּוֹן is ἀπαξ λεγόμενον; the last clause of 12 is based on Isa. lxi. 7. If our interpretation of צָדִיק and נוֹשֵׁעַ be right, they are late symptoms.

⁴ נוֹשֵׁעַ (ver. 9): the passive participle.

⁵ Cf. *Isaiah xl-lxvi*, p. 236.

next verse says that horses and chariots are to be removed from Israel,¹ but the ass, the animal not of lowliness, as some interpret, but of peace. To this day in the East asses are used, as represented in the Song of Deborah, by great officials, but only when these are upon civil, not military, duty.

It is possible that this oracle closes with ver. 10, and that we should take vv. 11 and 12, on the deliverance from exile, with the next.

ix. 9. *Rejoice to the full, daughter of Sion,
Shout aloud, daughter of Jerusalem.
Behold, thy King comes to thee,
Vindicated, victorious,²
Meek and riding an ass,³
A colt the she-ass' foal.⁴*

x. *He⁵ will cut off the chariot from Ephraim,
And the horse from Jerusalem,
Cut off shall the war-bow be,
And peace shall He speak to the nations,
And His rule shall be from sea to sea,
From the river on to the ends of the earth.*

xi. *Thou too, by thy covenant-blood⁶
I have freed thy prisoners from the pit.⁷
Return to the fortress, ye prisoners of hope,
To-day I proclaim, double I return thee.⁸*

¹ Why chariot from Ephraim and horse from Jerusalem is explained in *Hist. Geog.*, pp. 329-331.

² See above, p. 455.

³ Symbol of peace as the horse was of war.

⁴ Son of she-asses.

⁵ So LXX, Heb. *I*.

⁶ Heb. *blood of thy covenant*, but the suffix refers to the whole phrase (Duhm, *Theol. der Proph.*, p. 143). The covenant is Yahweh's; the blood is that which the people shed to ratify the covenant.

⁷ Heb. adds *there is no water in it*, but this is either a gloss, or perhaps an attempt to make sense out of a dittography of מִבּוֹר, or a corruption of *none shall be ashamed*.

⁸ Isa. lxi. 7.

3. THE SLAUGHTER OF THE GREEKS (ix. 13-17)

The next oracle seems singularly out of keeping with the spirit of the last, which declared the arrival of the Messianic peace, while this represents the Lord as using Israel for His weapons in the slaughter of the Greeks and heathens, in whose blood they shall revel. But Stade has pointed out how often in chs. ix-xiv a result is first stated and then the oracle goes on to describe the process by which it is achieved. So we have no ground for affirming ix. 13-17 to be by another hand than ix. 9-12. The apocalyptic character of the means by which the heathen are to be overthrown, and the exultation displayed in their slaughter, as in a great sacrifice (ver. 15), betray Israel in a state of political weakness, and therefore suit a date after Alexander's campaigns, which is made sure by the reference to the *sons of Javan*, as if Israel were in immediate contact with them. Kirkpatrick's note should be read, which seeks to prove *the sons of Javan* a gloss;¹ but his reasons are not conclusive. The language bears traces of lateness.²

ix. 13. *For I have drawn Me Judah as a bow,
I have charged it with Ephraim,
And urge thy sons, O Sion, on the sons of Yavan,³
And set thee the sword of a hero.*

14. *Then will Yahweh appear above them,
And His shaft shall go forth like lightning,
Lord Yahweh blows a blast on the trumpet
And travels on the storms of the south.⁴*

¹ *Doctrine of the Prophets*, Note A, p. 472.

² 14, on תימן see Eckardt; 15, זיוות, Aramaism; כבש is late; 16, התנוסס, only here and Psalm lx. 6; 17, נוב, probably late.

³ So LXX: Heb. reads, *thy sons, O Javan*.

⁴ LXX, ἐν σάλπ της ἀπειλῆς αὐτοῦ, *in the tossing of His threat*, בשער הער (?) or בשער הער. It is natural to see here a reference to the Theophanies of Hab. iii. 3, Deut. xxxiii. (see above, pp. 151 f.).

ix. 15. *Yahweh of Hosts will protect them,
They shall prevail¹ and tread . . .²
And drink up their blood³ like wine,
And be drenched like the corners of the altar.*

16. *And Yahweh their God will give them victory,
He will feed His folk like sheep on His land.*

17. *How fair it is and how beautiful,
Corn and new wine shall flourish there.⁴*

4. AGAINST THE TERAPHIM AND SORCERERS (x. 1, 2)

This piece is connected with the previous only through the latter's conclusion upon the fertility of the land, while this opens with rain, the requisite of fertility. It is connected only by its mention of the shepherdless state of the people with the piece that follows against the false shepherds. These connections are slight. Perhaps the piece is an independent one. The subject gives no clue to the date. Sorcerers are condemned both by earlier and by later prophets.⁵ Stade points out that this is the only passage of the Old Testament

¹ Read וִיכָלֵי; LXX, καταναλώσουσιν αὐτοὺς.

² Heb. *stones of a sling*, אבני קלע. Wellhausen and Nowack read *sons*, בני, but what then is קלע? Some emend to *Yavan*.

³ With some codd. of LXX read דמם for Heb. דמיו.

⁴ Heb. *like a flock of sheep His people* (but how to construe this with the context?) *for (? like) stones of a diadem lifting themselves up (? shimmering) over His land*. Wellhausen and Nowack delete *for stones . . . shimmering* as a gloss. This would leave *like a flock of sheep His people in His land*, to which they add *He will feed*. This gives sense. Marti goes further, omitting *young men* and *maidens*, points out how all the omitted words make a sentence by themselves, perhaps originally entered on the margin: *in that day like shimmering diamond stones the young men and the maidens*.

⁵ Of these cf. 'Mal.' iii. 5; the late Jer. xlv. 8 ff.; Isa. lxx. 3-5; and, in the Priestly Law, Lev. xix. 31, xx. 6.

in which the Teraphim are said to speak.¹ The language has one late symptom.²

After emphasising the futility of images, enchantments and dreams, this oracle says, therefore the people wander: they have no shepherd. Shepherd cannot mean civil ruler, but must be religious director.

x. 1. *Ask from Yahweh rain in season early and late,³
Yahweh Who maketh the lightning flashes
And the winter rain He gives them,
For every man grass on the field.*

2. *But the Teraphim utter nothingness,
And the sorcerers see but fraud.
And the dreamers speak but vanity
And comfort with bubbles.
Wherefore they wander ⁴ like sheep
And stray ⁵ for there is no shepherd.*

5. AGAINST EVIL SHEPHERDS (x. 3-12)

The unity of this section is more apparent than its connection with the preceding, which speaks of the want of a shepherd, or religious director, of Israel, while this is directed against their shepherds and leaders, meaning their foreign tyrants.⁶ The figure is from Jeremiah xxiii. 1 ff., where, besides, *to visit upon* ⁷

¹ *Z.A.T.W.*, I, 60. He compares this verse with 1 Sam. xv. 23. In Ezek. xxi. 21 they give oracles.

² חֲזִוִּי, *lightning-flash*, only here and in Job xxviii. 26, xxxviii. 25.

³ So LXX. Heb. *rain in the time of the latter rain*.

⁴ נָסְעוּ, used of a nomadic life in Jer. xxxi. 24 (23), and so it is possible that in a later stage of the language it had come to mean to wander or stray. But this is doubtful, and there may be a false reading, as appears from LXX, ἐξῆλθεν ὁ ποιμήν.

⁵ For יַעֲנֻן read וַיַּנְעֻן. The LXX ἀκαθάρτησαν, read וַיִּרְעֻן.

⁶ There can therefore be none of that connection between the two pieces which Kirkpatrick assumes (p. 454 and note 2).

⁷ פָּקַד עָלָיו.

is used in a sense of punishment, but the simple *visit*¹ in the sense of to look after, just as in ver. 3 of this tenth chapter. Who these foreign tyrants are is not stated, but the reference to Egypt and Assyria as lands whence the Jewish captives shall be brought home, while at the same time there is a Jewish nation in Judah, suits only the Greek period, after Ptolemy had taken many Jews to Egypt,² and numbers were still scattered through the other empire in the north, to which, as we have seen, the Jews applied the name of Assyria. The reference hardly suits the years after Seleucus and Ptolemy granted to the Jews in their territories the rights of citizens. The captive Jews are to be brought back to Gilead and Lebanon. Why these are mentioned, and neither Samaria nor Galilee, forms a difficulty, to whatever age we assign the chapter. The language has late features.³ Joseph or Ephraim, here and elsewhere in these chapters, is used of the portion of Israel still in captivity, in contrast to Judah, the returned community.

The passage predicts that Yahweh will change His leaderless sheep, the Jews, into war-horses, and give them chiefs and weapons of war. They shall overthrow the heathen, and Yahweh bring back His exiles. The passage is therefore one with ch. ix.

x. 3. *Against the shepherds My wrath is hot* .
*And on the he-goats*⁴ *I make visitation.*
*Yea Yahweh will*⁵ *visit His flock*
And turn them to splendid war-steeds.

¹ פקד את.

² See above, pp. 433 f.

³ x. 5, בוס, Eckardt, p. 82; 6, 12, נָבֵר, Pi., cf. Eccles. x. 10, where it alone occurs besides here; 5, 11, הַבִּישׁוּ in passive sense.

⁴ As we should say, *bell-wethers*: cf. Isa. xiv. 9, also a late meaning.

⁵ So LXX, reading כִּרְפֵּקֶד for כִּרְפֵּקֶד.

4. *From them the corner-stone,
From them the stay,¹
From them the war-bow,
From them the attacker—shall forth together.*

5. *And they shall be trampling on warriors,²
Like dirt² in the streets, in battle,
And shall fight, for Yahweh is with them,
Till abashed be the riders on horses.³*

6. *I will strengthen the house of Judah,
And will save the house of Joseph,
And bring them back⁴ for I pity them,⁵
And they be as I never had banished them.⁶*

*[For I am Yahweh their God
And I will hold converse with them.]*

7. *Ephraim shall be as heroes,
Their heart shall rejoice like wine,
Their children shall see and be glad,
Their heart shall exult in Yahweh.*

8. *I will whistle for them and gather them in,
For I have redeemed them,
And they shall be many
As once they were.*

¹ *Corner-stone* as name for a chief: cf. Judg. xx. 2; 1 Sam. xiv. 38; Isa. xix. 13. *Stay* or *tent-pin*, Isa. xxii. 23. *From them* others render *from Him*. But the idea is that all their leaders shall not be foreign but from the Jews themselves.

² Read בַּנְּבָרִים and קָטִיט (Wellhausen).

³ The famous Syrian cavalry, Isa. xxx. 16, xxxi. 1.

⁴ Read וְהַשְׁבוֹתִים for Mass. וְהַשְׁבוֹתִים, *I will make them dwell*.

⁵ רַחֲמִים and זַנְחָתִים, אֱלֹהִים and אֲנַם, key-words, Hos. i-iii.

⁶ LXX; sing. Heb.

- x. 9. *I scattered ¹ them through the nations,
And in the distance they think of Me,
And they will bring up ² their children,
And they will come back.*
10. *I will fetch them home from the land of Egypt
And from Ashûr ³ I will gather them in,
And to Gilead's land and Lebánon
Bring them in although there suffice not.*
11. *They ⁴ shall pass through the sea of Egypt,⁵
He shall smite the sea of the breakers,
And the deeps of the Nile shall be dried,
And Assyria's pride brought down,
And the sceptre of Egypt swept off.*
12. *But their strength ⁶ shall be in Yahweh,
And in His Name shall they boast—⁷
The Rede of Yahweh.*

6. WAR ON THE SYRIAN TYRANTS (xi. 1-3)

This is taken by some with the previous chapter, by others with the passage following. Either connection seems precarious. No conclusion as to date can be drawn from the language. But the localities threatened were on the south front of the Seleucid kingdom. *Open, Lebánon, thy doors* suits its invasions by Egypt.

¹ Change the points that make the verb future (Nowack).

² With LXX read נִחִי for Mass. נִחִי.

³ See p. 433.

⁴ So LXX, Heb. sing.

⁵ Heb. צָרָה, *narrow sea*; so LXX, but Wellhausen suggests מצרים, which Nowack adopts.

⁶ גְּבוּרָתָם for גְּבוּרָתִים.

⁷ For יִתְחַלְכוּ read יִתְחַלְלוּ with LXX and Syr.

To which the passage refers cannot be determined.
The shepherds are rulers.

- xi. 1. *Open, Lebánon, thy doors,
That fire may devour thy cedars.*
2. *Wail O cypress, the cedar is fallen.¹
Wail O oaks of Bashan, felled is the solid² wood.*
3. *Hark to the wail of the shepherds,
For their glory is ruined,
Hark, how the young lions roar,
For blasted is the pride³ of Jordan.*

7. THE REJECTION AND MURDER OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD (xi. 4-17, xiii. 7-9)

There follows through the rest of ch. xi a longer oracle to which Ewald and most after him suitably attach xiii. 7-9.

This passage appears to rise from circumstances similar to those of the preceding and from the same circle of ideas. The Lord's people are his flock and have suffered. Their rulers are their shepherds; and the rulers of other peoples are the shepherds of these. A true shepherd is sought for Israel in place of the evil ones which have distressed them. The language shows traces of a late date.⁴ No historical allusion is obvious. The *buyers* and *sellers* of God's sheep might reflect

¹ Heb. adds *for nobles are wasted*, probably a gloss.

² After the Keri.

³ That is *rankness* or *jungle* as in the river's larger bed, *Hist. Geog.*, p. 484.

⁴ xi. 5, **וַאֲעִשָׂר**, Hiph., but intransitive, *grow rich*; 6, **מִמְצִיא**; 7, **נָעַם** (?); 8, **בַּחֵל**, Aram.; 13, **יָקָר**, Aram., Jer. xx. 5, Ezek. xxii. 25, Job xxviii. 10, in Esther ten, in Daniel four times (Eckardt); xiii. 7, **עֲמִית**, one mark of the affinity of the language of 'Zech.' ix-xiv to that of the Priestly Code (cf. Lev. v. 21, xviii. 20, etc.), but in P it is concrete, here abstract; 8, **בֹּעַ**, Eckardt, 85.

the Seleucids and Ptolemies between whom Israel were exchanged for many years, but probably mean their native leaders. The *three shepherds cut off in a month* were interpreted by supporters of the pre-exilic date of the chapters as Zechariah and Shallum (2 Kings xv. 8-13), and another whom these critics assume to have followed them to death, but of him history has no trace. The supporters of a Maccabean date for the prophecy recall the quick succession of high priests¹ before the Maccabean rising. *One month* means no more than a very short time.

The allegory which the passage unfolds is given, like others, in Hebrew prophecy to the prophet himself to enact. It recalls the pictures in Jeremiah and Ezekiel of the overthrow of false shepherds, and the appointment of a true shepherd.² Yahweh commissions the prophet to become shepherd to His sheep, abused by their guides and rulers. Like the shepherds of Palestine, the prophet took two staves to herd his flock. He called one *Grace*, the other *Union*. In a month he cut off three shepherds—*month* and *three* are formal terms. But he did not get on well with his charge. They were wilful and quarrelsome. So he broke his staff *Grace*, in token that his engagement was dissolved. The dealers of the sheep saw that he acted for God. He asked for his wage, if they cared to give it. They gave thirty pieces of silver, the price of an injured slave,³ which by God's command he cast into the treasury of the Temple, as if it were God Himself whom they paid with so wretched a sum. Then he broke his other staff, to signify that the brotherhood

¹ Lysimachus slain 171 B.C., Jason expelled 170, and Menelaus who saw the worship broken off in 168.

² Jer. xxiii. 1-8; Ezek. xxxiv, xxxvii. 24 ff. : Kirkpatrick, 462.

³ Exod. xxi. 32.

between Judah and Israel was broken. Then, to show the people that by their rejection of the good shepherd they must fall to an evil one, the prophet assumed the character of the latter. But another judgement follows. In xiii. 7-9 the good shepherd is smitten and the flock dispersed.

The principles which underlie this allegory are obvious. God's sheep, persecuted and helpless though they be, are yet obstinate, and their obstinacy not only renders God's good-will to them futile, but causes the death of the man who would have done them good. The guilty sacrifice the innocent, but in this execute their doom. That is a summary of Israel's history. But had the writer any special part of that history in view?—Who were the *dealers of the flock*?

xi. 4-16. *Thus saith Yahweh my God: ¹ Shepherd the flock of slaughter, whose purchasers slaughter them and go unpunished ² and whose sellers say, ³ Blessed be Yahweh, for I am rich!—and their shepherds do not spare them. [For I will no more spare the inhabitants of the earth—Rede of Yahweh; but lo! I am about to give mankind ⁴ over, each into the hand of his shepherd, ⁵ and into the hand of his king; and they shall destroy the earth, and I will not secure it from their hands. ⁶] So I shepherded the flock of slaughter for the sheep merchants, ⁷ and I took to me two staves—the one I called Grace,*

¹ LXX, *God of Hosts*.

² That is they think they do!

³ Read plural with LXX.

⁴ That is the late Hebrew name for the heathen: cf. ix. 1.

⁵ Heb. רֵעֵהוּ, *neighbour*; read רֵעֵהוּ.

⁶ Many take ver. 6 as an intrusion. It adds nothing to the sense and interrupts the connection, which is clear without it.

⁷ Heb. לִכְנָעִי עֲנֵי הַצֹּאֵן, *wherefore the miserable of the flock, makes no sense*. But LXX, εἰς τῆς Χαναανιτῶν, suggests the Heb. לִכְנָעִי, *to the Canaanites, i.e., doomed to the merchants*: so in ver. 11.

and the other I called Union¹—and so I shepherded the sheep. [And I destroyed the three shepherds in one month.]² Then was my soul vexed with them,³ and they on their part displeased with me. And I said: I will not shepherd you: what is dying, let it die; what is to be destroyed, let it be destroyed; and those that survive, let them devour one another's flesh! And I took my staff Grace, and I brake it so as to annul my covenant which I made with all the peoples.⁴ And on that day it was annulled, and the dealers of the sheep,⁵ who watched me, knew that it was Yahweh's word. And I said to them, If it be good in your eyes, give me my wage, and if it be not good, let it go! And they weighed out my wage, thirty pieces of silver. Then said Yahweh to me, Throw it into ~~the~~ treasury⁶ (the precious wage at which I⁷ had been valued⁸ of them). So I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the House of Yahweh, to the treasury.⁹ And I brake my second staff, Union, so as to dissolve the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.⁹ And Yahweh

¹ Lit. *Bands*.

² This clause many take as a later addition, after 168. See above, p. 464, n. 1.

³ That is the sheep, not the three shepherds.

⁴ The sense is obscure. Is the text sound? In harmony with the context עַמִּים ought to mean *tribes of Israel*. But every passage in the O.T. in which עַמִּים might mean *tribes* has a doubtful text: Deut. xxxii. 8, xxxiii. 3; Hosea x. 14; Micah i. 2.

⁵ See above, p. 465, n. 7, on the same mis-read phrase in ver. 7.

⁶ Heb. הַיָּצֵר, *the potter*. LXX, χυμευτήριον, *smelting furnace*.

Read הַיָּצֵר by change of נ for י: the two are often confounded; see n. 8.

⁷ Wellhausen and Nowack needlessly read *thou hast been valued of them*. The clause is a sarcastic parenthesis by the prophet.

⁸ Again Heb. *the potter*; LXX, *the smelting furnace*, as in ver. 13. The clause *House of God* proves how right it is to read *the treasury*, and disposes of the idea that *to throw to the potter* was a proverb for throwing away.

⁹ Two codd. *Jerusalem*, so Wellhausen, Nowack, Marti.

said to me: Take again to thee the implements of a worthless shepherd: for lo! I am about to appoint a shepherd over the land; those going to ruin he will not visit, the scattered¹ he will not seek out, the wounded he will not heal, the . . .² he will not cherish, but he will devour the flesh of the fat sheep and tear in pieces their hoofs.

- xi. 17. Woe to My worthless³ shepherd
Who deserts the flock!
The sword be down on his arm
And on his right eye.
His arm be withered outright,
And his right eye be blinded.

Upon this follows the section xiii. 7-9, which develops the tragedy of the nation to its climax in the murder of the good shepherd.

- xiii. 7. Up, O sword, against My shepherd,
Against the man, My fellow⁴—
Rede of Yahweh of Hosts—
I will smite⁵ the shepherd
That the sheep be scattered,
And turn My hand on the little ones.⁶
8. And it shall be through all the land—
'Tis the Rede of Yahweh—
Two thirds shall be cut off and perish
But a third be left in it.

¹ Heb. הַנִּצָּר, *the scattered*. LXX, τὸν ἐσκοπισμένον.

² הַנִּצָּבָה, obscure: some translate *the sound or stable*.

³ For Heb. הַאֲלִיל, read as in ver. 15, הַאֲוִיל.

⁴ עֲמִית: only in Lev. and here; the high-priest is meant.

⁵ Heb. the imperative הָךְ, but read אֶכֶּה with some MSS. and Matt.

xxvi. 31.

⁶ Some take this as a promise: *turn My hand towards the little ones*.

- xiii. 9. *I shall bring the third to the fire
And smelt it as men smelt silver,
And try it as they try gold.
It shall call on My Name
And I will answer it.
And I will be saying,¹ My people,
And it shall say, Yahweh my God!*

8. JUDAH *versus* JERUSALEM (xii. 1-7)

A title, though probably later than the text,² introduces with the beginning of xii an oracle from circumstances different from those of the preceding chapters. The nations, not particularised as they have been, gather to the siege of Jerusalem, and, singularly, Judah is with them against her capital. But God makes the city like one of those boulders, deeply embedded, which husbandmen try to pull up from their fields, but it tears and wounds the hands that would remove it. Moreover, God strikes with panic all the besiegers, save Judah, who, her eyes opened, perceives that God is with Jerusalem and turns to her help. Jerusalem remains in her place; but the glory of the victory is first Judah's, so that the house of David may not have too much fame nor boast over the country districts. The writer alludes to some schism between the capital and country caused by the arrogance of the former. We have no means of knowing when this took place. It must often have been imminent in the days both before and especially after the Exile, when Jerusalem had absorbed the religious privilege and influence of the nation. The language is late.³

¹ LXX. Heb. אִמְרָתִי, but the י has fallen from the front of it.

² See above, p. 450.

³ xii. 2, רָעַל, a noun not found elsewhere in O.T. We found the verb in Nahum ii. 4, and probably in Hab. ii. 16 for וְהָעָרִל (p. 148, n. 4)!

The figure of Jerusalem as a boulder, bedded in the soil, which tears the hands that seek to remove it, is a true and expressive summary of the history of heathen assaults upon her. Till she was rent by internal dissensions, and the Romans at last tore her loose, she remained planted on her own site.¹ This was true of all the Greek period. Seleucids and Ptolemies alike wounded themselves upon her. But at what period did either induce Judah to take part against her? Not in the Maccabean.

Oracle of the Word of Yahweh upon Israel

xii. 1-7. *Rede of Yahweh, Who stretched out the heavens and founded the earth, and formed the spirit of man within him: Lo, I am about to make Jerusalem a cup of reeling for all the surrounding peoples, and even Judah² shall be at the siege of Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass on that day that I will make Jerusalem a stone to be lifted³ by all the peoples—all who lift it indeed*

it is common in Aramean; other forms belong to later Hebrew (cf. Eckardt, p. 85). 3, שָׂרַט is used in classic Heb. only of cutting and tattooing of oneself; the sense of *wounding* which it has here is frequent in Aramean. 3 has besides מַעֲמֶסָה אֲבָן, not found elsewhere. 4 has three nouns terminating in יוֹן, two—תַּמְהוֹן, *panic*, and עִוְיוֹן, *judicial blindness*—only found here and Deut. xxviii. 28, the former also Aramean. 7, לִמְעַן לֵא is also cited by Eckardt as used only in Ezek. xix. 6, xxvi. 20, and four times in Psalms.

¹ xii. 6, תַּחְתִּיהָ.

² The text reads *against* Judah, as if it with Jerusalem suffered the siege of the heathen. But (1) this makes an unconstruable clause, and (2) the context shows that Judah was *against* Jerusalem. Geiger (*Urschrift*, p. 58) is right in deleting עַל, and restoring to the clause both sense and harmony with the context. It is easy to see why עַל was introduced. LXX, καὶ ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ.

³ Since Jerome, commentators have thought of a stone by throwing or lifting which men try their strength, our 'putting stone.' But is not the idea rather of one of the large stones half-buried in the earth which the husbandman tries to tear from its bed and carry out of his field before he ploughs it? Keil and Wright think of a heavy stone for building. This is not so likely.

wound¹ themselves—and there are gathered against her all nations of the earth. On that day—Rede of Yahweh—I will smite all the horse with panic, and their riders with madness; but as for the house of Judah, I will open its² eyes, though all the horse of the peoples I smite with blindness. Then shall the chiefs³ of Judah say in their hearts: Found is the strength of (?)⁴ the inhabitants of Jerusalem in Yahweh of Hosts their God. On that day will I make the districts of Judah like a pan of fire among timber and like a torch among sheaves, till they devour right and left all the peoples round about, but Jerusalem shall still abide on its own site.⁵ And Yahweh shall first give victory to the tents⁶ of Judah, so that the fame of the house of David and the fame of the inhabitants of Jerusalem be not too great over Judah.

9. FOUR RESULTS OF JERUSALEM'S DELIVERANCE (xii. 8–xiii. 6)

Upon the deliverance of Jerusalem, by the help of the converted Judah, there follow four results, each introduced by the words that it happened *on that day* (xii. 8, 9, xiii. 1, 2). First, the people of Jerusalem shall be strengthened. Second, the heathen shall be

¹ שָׂרַט, elsewhere only in Lev. xxi. 5, cutting of oneself as a sign of mourning. Nowack takes the clause as an intrusion; there is no reason for this.

² Heb. *upon Judah will I keep My eyes open* to protect him, and this has analogies, Job xiv. 3, Jer. xxxii. 19. But the reading *its eyes*, made by inserting a ך that might have dropped out through confusion with the initial ך of the next word, has also analogies (Isa. xlii. 7. etc.), and stands in better parallel to the next clause, as well as to the clauses describing the panic of the heathen.

³ Others read אֲלָפִי, *thousands, i.e., districts*.

⁴ Heb. *I will find me*; LXX, εὐρήσομεν ἑαυτοῖς.

⁵ Hebrew adds a gloss: *in Jerusalem*.

⁶ The population in time of war.

destroyed, but on the house of David and all Jerusalem the spirit of penitence shall be poured, and they will lament for the good shepherd whom they slew. Third, a fountain for sin and uncleanness shall be opened. Fourth, the idols, the unclean spirit, and prophecy, now degraded, shall be abolished. The connection of these oracles with the preceding is obvious, as well as with that describing the murder of the good shepherd (xiii. 7-9). When we see how this is presupposed by xii. 9 ff., we feel more than ever that its right place is between chs. xi and xii. There are no historical allusions. But again the language gives evidence of a late date.¹ And throughout there is a repetition of formal phrases which recalls the Priestly Code and the style of the post-exilic age.² Notice that no king is mentioned, although there are points at which, had he existed, he must have been introduced.

1. The first of the four effects of Jerusalem's deliverance is the promotion of her weaklings to the strength of her heroes, and of her heroes to divine rank (xii. 8). *On that day will Yahweh protect the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the lame among them shall on that day be like David, and the house of David like God, like the Angel of Yahweh before them.*

2. The second paragraph of this series remarkably emphasises that upon her deliverance Jerusalem shall not give way to rejoicing, but to penitence for the murder of him she has pierced—the good shepherd

¹ xii. 10, שֶׁפַךְ יָדָם, not earlier than Ezek. xxxix. 29, Joel iii. 1, 2 (Heb.); תַּחֲנוּנִים, only in Job, Proverbs, Psalms and Daniel; הַמֵּר, an intrans. Hiph.; xiii. 1, מִקּוֹר, fountain, before Jeremiah only in Hosea xiii. 15 (perhaps late), but several times in post-exilic writings instead of pre-exilic בְּאֵר (Eckardt); נִקְדָּה, only after Ezekiel; 3, cf.

xii. 10, דִּקְר, chiefly, not only, in post-exilic writings.

² Especially xii. 12 ff., which is suggestive of the Priestly Code.

her people have rejected and slain. This is one of the few ethical strains through these apocalyptic chapters. It forms their highest interest. Jerusalem's mourning is compared to that for *Hadad-Rimmon in the valley or plain of Megiddo*. This is the classic battle-field of the land, and the theatre upon which Apocalypse placed the last contest between the hosts of God and the hosts of evil.¹ In Israel's history it had been the ground not only of triumph but of tears. The tragedy of that history, the defeat and death of the righteous Josiah, took place there ;² and since the earliest Jewish interpreters the *mourning of Hadad-Rimmon in the valley of Megiddo* has been referred to the mourning for Josiah.³ Jerome identifies Hadad-Rimmon with Rummâni,⁴ a village on the plain still extant, close to Megiddo. But the lamentation for Josiah was at Jerusalem ; and it cannot be proved that Hadad-Rimmon is a place-name. It may be the name of the object of the mourning, and as Hadad was a divine name among Phœnicians and Arameans, and Rimmon the pomegranate was a sacred tree, some critics suppose this to be a title of Adonis, and the mourning like that excessive grief which Ezekiel says was yearly celebrated for Tammuz.⁵ This, however, is not proved.⁶ Observe, further, that while the reading Hadad-Rimmon is not past doubt, the sanguine blossoms and fruit of the pomegranate, 'red-ripe at the heart,' would lead to its association with the slaughtered Adonis.

xii. 9-14. *And it shall come to pass on that day I will*

¹ *Hist. Geog.*, Ch. XIX. On *plain of Megiddo* see p. 386.

² *Chron.* xxxv. 22 ff.

³ Another explanation offered by the Targum is the mourning for

⁴ Ahab son of Omri, slain by Hadad-Rimmon son of Tab-Rimmon.

⁵ LXX gives for Hadad-Rimmon only the second part, ῥοῶν.

⁶ Ezek. viii. 14.

⁷ Baudissin, *Studien z. Sem. Rel. Gesch.*, I, 295 ff.

seek to destroy all the nations who come in against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplication, and they shall look to him¹ whom they pierced; and they shall lament for him, as with lamentation for an only son, and bitterly grieve for him, as with grief for a first-born. On that day lamentation in Jerusalem shall be as great as the lamentation for Hadad-Rimmon² in the Vale of Megiddo. And the land shall mourn, every family by itself: the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of Shime'i³ by itself, and their wives by themselves; all the families who are left, family by family, and their wives by themselves.

3. The third result of Jerusalem's deliverance shall be the opening of a fountain of cleansing (xiii. 1). This purging of her sin follows fitly upon her penitence just described. *On that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David, and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.*⁴

4. The fourth consequence is the removal of idolatry, of the unclean spirit and the degraded prophets. The last is remarkable: for it is not merely false prophets, as distinguished from true, who shall be removed; but prophecy in general. It is singular that in almost its latest passage the prophecy of Israel should return to the line of its earliest representative, Amos, who refused

¹ Heb. *Me*; several codd. *him*: some read מִי, *to (him) whom they have pierced*; but this requires the elision of the acc. before *who*. Wellhausen, etc., something has fallen out.

² See above, p. 472.

³ LXX, Σιμεών.

⁴ Cf. Ezek. xxxvi. 25, xlvii. 1.

to call himself prophet. As in his day, the prophets had become mere mercenary oracle-mongers, abjured to the point of death by their ashamed relatives.

xiii. 2-6. *And it shall be on that day—Rede of Yahweh of Hosts—I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they shall not be remembered any more. And also the prophets and the unclean spirit will I expel from the land. And it shall come to pass, if any man still prophecy, then shall his father and mother who begat him say to him, Thou shalt not live, for thou speakest falsehood in the name of Yahweh; and his father and mother who begat him shall stab him for his prophesying. And it shall be on that day that the prophets shall be ashamed every man of his vision in his prophesying, and they shall not wear the leather cloak in order to lie. And he will say, No Prophet am I! A tiller of the ground I am, for the ground is my business¹ from my youth up. And they shall say to him, What are these wounds in² thy hands? and he shall say, What I was wounded with in the house of my paramour.*

10. JUDGEMENT OF THE HEATHEN AND SANCTIFICATION OF JERUSALEM (xiv)

In another apocalyptic vision the prophet beholds Jerusalem again beset by the heathen. But Yahweh intervenes, in person, and an earthquake breaks out at His feet. The heathen are smitten into mouldering corpses. Their remnant shall be converted to Yahweh and take part in the annual Feast of Booths. If any refuse they shall be punished with drought. But Jerusalem shall abide in security and holiness: every detail of her equipment shall be consecrate. The passage

¹ Read אֲדָמָה קִנֵּנִי for Heb. אָדָם הִקְנֵנִי: so Wellhausen.

² Heb. *between*.

has many resemblances to the preceding oracles.¹ The language is late, and the figures borrowed from other prophets, chiefly Ezekiel. It is a characteristic specimen of the Jewish Apocalypse. The destruction of the heathen is described in verses of terrible grimness: no tenderness nor hope is exhibited for them. And even in the picture of Jerusalem's holiness we have no really ethical elements, but the details are ceremonial.

xiv. 1-12. *Lo! a day is coming for Yahweh,² when thy spoil shall be divided in thy midst. And I will gather all the nations to besiege Jerusalem, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women ravished; half of the city shall go into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city. And Yahweh shall go forth and do battle with those nations, as on the day when He fought, on the day of contest. And His feet shall stand on that day on the Mount of Olives which is over against Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split into halves from east to west by a very great ravine, and half of the Mount will slide northwards and half southwards . . . ,³ for the ravine of mountains⁴ shall extend to 'Aṣal,⁵ and ye shall flee as ye fled from before*

¹ But see below, p. 478.

² לַיהוָה: or *belonging to Yahweh*; or like the *Lamed auctoris* or Lamed when construed with passive verbs (Oxford *Heb.-Eng. Dictionary*, pp. 513 and 514, col. 1) *from, by means of, Yahweh*.

³ Heb. *and ye shall flee, the ravine of My mountains*. The text is corrupt, but it is difficult to see how it should be repaired. LXX, Targ. Symmachus and the Bab. codd. (Baer, p. 84) read וְנִסְתָּם, *shall be closed*, for וְנִסְתָּם, *ye shall flee*, and this is adopted by a number (Bredenkamp, Wellhausen, Nowack). But it is hardly possible before the next clause, which says the valley extends to 'Aṣal.

⁴ Wellhausen suggests the ravine (נִיָּא) of Hinnom.

⁵ אֶצֶל, place-name: cf. אֶצֶל, name of a family of Benjamin, 1 Chron. viii. 37 f., ix. 43 f.; and בֵּית הָאֶצֶל, Micah i. 11. Some would read אֶצֶל, the adverb *near by*.

the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah,¹ and Yahweh my God will come and² all the holy ones with Him.³ And on that day there shall not be light, . . . congeal.⁴ And it shall be one⁵ day—it is known to Yahweh⁶—neither day nor night; but it shall come to pass that at eventide there shall be light.

And it shall be on that day that living waters shall flow forth from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea: both in summer and in winter shall it be. And Yahweh shall be King over all the earth: on that day Yahweh shall be One and His Name One. All the land shall be changed to plain,⁷ from Geba' to Rimmon,⁸ south of Jerusalem; but she shall be high and abide in her place⁹ from the Gate of Benjamin up to the place of the First Gate, up to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hanan'el as far as the King's Winepresses. And they shall dwell in her, and there shall be no more Ban,¹⁰ and Jerusalem shall abide in security. And this shall be the stroke with which

¹ Amos i. 1.

² LXX.

³ LXX; Heb. *thee*.

⁴ Heb. Kethibh, יְקָרֹת יִקְפְּאוֹן, *jewels* (? hardly stars as some seek to prove from Job xxxi. 26) *grow dead or congealed*. Heb. קֶרֶת, *jewels and frost*, יִקְפְּאוֹן LXX, καὶ ψύχῃ καὶ πάγος, וְקָרֹת יִקְפְּאוֹן, *and cold and frost*. On this Wellhausen proposes חום for אֹר, and renders, *there shall be neither heat nor cold nor frost*. So Nowack. But how did חום ever get changed to אֹר?

⁵ *Unique or the same?*

⁶ Taken as a gloss by Wellhausen, Nowack and others.

⁷ יַרְבֵּה, the name for the Jordan Valley, the Ghôr (*Hist. Geog.*, pp. 482–484), here employed, not for its fertility, but for its level character. Cf. Josephus, 'the Great Plain' (IV, *Wars*, viii. 2; IV, *Antt.*, vi. 1): I Macc. v. 52, xvi. 11.

⁸ Geba', 'long the limit of Judah to the north, 2 Kings xxiii. 8' (*Hist. Geog.*, pp. 252, 291). Rimmon was on the S. border of Palestine (Josh. xv. 32, xix. 7), now Umm er Rummamîn N. of Beersheba (Rob., *B.R.*).

⁹ Or *be inhabited as she stands*.

¹⁰ Cf. 'Mal.' iii. 24 (Heb.; Eng. iv. 6).

Yahweh will smite all the peoples who have warred against Jerusalem: He will make their flesh moulder while they still stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall moulder in their sockets, and their tongue moulder in their mouth.

xiv. 13-14. [*And it shall come to pass on that day, there shall be a great confusion from Yahweh among them, and they shall grip every man the hand of his fellow, and his hand shall be lifted against the hand of his fellow.*¹ *And even Judah shall fight against Jerusalem, and the wealth of all the nations around shall be swept up, gold and silver and garments, in a very great mass.* These two verses, 13 and 14, disturb the connection, which ver. 15 resumes with ver. 12. They are generally regarded as an intrusion.² But why they were inserted is not clear. Ver. 14 is a curious echo of the strife between Judah and Jerusalem described in ch. xii. They may be not a mere intrusion, but simply out of their place: yet, if so, where this place lies is impossible to determine.]

xiv. 15-19. *Even so shall be the plague upon the horses, mules, camels and asses, and all the beasts which are in those camps—just like this plague. And it shall come to pass that all that survive of all the nations, who have come against Jerusalem, shall come up from year to year to do obeisance to King Yahweh of Hosts, and to keep the Feast of Booths. And it shall be that whosoever of all the races of earth will not come up to Jerusalem to do obeisance to King Yahweh of Hosts, upon them there shall be no rain. And if the race of Egypt go not up nor come in, upon them also shall³ come the plague, with which Yahweh shall strike the nations that go not up to keep the Feast of Booths. Such shall be the punish-*

¹ Ezek. xxxviii. 21.

² So Wellhausen and Nowack, etc.

³ So LXX and Syr. The Heb. text inserts a *not*.

ment¹ of Egypt, and the punishment¹ of all nations who do not go up to keep the Feast of Booths.

The Feast of Booths was one of thanksgiving for the harvest ; that is why the neglect of it is punished by the withholding of the rain which brings the harvest. But such a punishment for such a neglect shows how fully prophecy has become subject to the Law. One is tempted to think what Amos or Jeremiah or even ' Malachi ' would have thought of this. Verily all the writers of the prophetical books do not stand upon the same level of religion. This writer remembers that the curse of no rain cannot affect the Egyptians, the fertility of whose rainless land is secured by the annual floods of her river. So he inserts a special verse for Egypt. She also will be plagued by Yahweh, yet he does not tell us in what fashion.

The book closes with a little oracle of the most ceremonial description, connected not only in temper but even by subject with what has gone before. The very horses, which hitherto have been regarded as too foreign,² or—as even in this group of oracles³—as too warlike, to exist in Jerusalem, shall be consecrated to Yahweh. And so vast shall be the multitudes who throng from all the earth to the feasts and sacrifices at the Temple, that the pots of the latter shall be as large as the great altar-bowls,⁴ and every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be consecrated for use in the ritual. This hallowing of the horses raises the question, whether the passage can be from the same hand as wrote the prediction of the disappearance of all horses from Jerusalem.⁵

¹ חַטָּאת, in classic Heb. *sin*; but as in Num. xxxii. 23 and Isa. v. 18, *the punishment that sin brings down*.

² Hosea xiv. 3.

³ ix. 10.

⁴ So Wellhausen.

⁵ ix. 10.

xiv. 20. *On that day there shall be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness unto Yahweh. And the pots in the House of Yahweh shall be as the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holy to Yahweh of Hosts, and all who sacrifice shall come and take of them and cook in them. And there shall be no more any pedlar¹ in the House of Yahweh of Hosts on that day.*

¹ Heb. *Canaanite*. Cf. Christ's action in cleansing the Temple of all dealers (Matt. xxi. 12-14).

JONAH

' And this is the tragedy of the Book of Jonah, that a Book which is made the means of one of the most sublime revelations of truth in the Old Testament should be known to most only for its connection with a whale.'

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE BOOK OF JONAH

THE Book of Jonah is cast throughout in narrative—the only one of our Twelve which is so. This, combined with the extraordinary events which the narrative relates, starts questions not raised by any of the rest. Besides treating of the book's origin, unity, division and other commonplaces of introduction, we must seek reasons for the appearance of such a narrative in a collection of prophetic discourses. We have to ask whether the narrative is one of fact; and if not, why the author was directed to such a form to enforce the truth committed to him.

The appearance of a narrative among the Twelve Prophets is not, in itself, exceptional. Parts of the Books of Amos and Hosea treat of the experience of their authors. The same is true of the Books of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, in which the prophet's call and his attitude to it are regarded as elements of his message to men. No: the peculiarity of the Book of Jonah is not the presence of narrative, but the absence of prophetic discourse.¹

Even this might be explained by reference to the first part of the prophetic canon—Joshua to Second Kings.² These Former Prophets, so-called, are wholly

¹ Unless the Psalm were counted as such. See below, pp. 498 f.

² *Minus* Ruth of course.

narrative—narrative in the prophetic spirit, written to enforce a moral. Many begin as the Book of Jonah does : ¹ they contain stories, for instance of Elijah and Elisha, who flourished before Jonah and like him were sent to foreign lands. It might be argued that the Book of Jonah, though narrative, is as much a prophetic book as they, and that the reason why it found a place, not with these histories, but among the Later Prophets, is the late date of its composition.²

This is a plausible, but not the real, answer to our question. Suppose we were to find the latter by discovering that the Book of Jonah, though in narrative form, is not history at all, nor pretends to be ; but, from beginning to end is as much a prophetic sermon as any of the Twelve Books, yet cast in the form of parable or allegory ? This would explain the adoption of the Book among the Twelve ; nor would its allegorical character appear without precedent to those (and they are among the conservative critics) who maintain (as the present writer does not) the allegorical character of the story of Hosea and his wife.³

It is when we pass from the form to the substance of the book that we perceive the justification of its reception among the prophets. The truth which we find in the Book of Jonah is as full a revelation of God's will as prophecy anywhere achieves. That God has *granted to the Gentiles also repentance unto life* ⁴ is nowhere else in the Old Testament so vividly illustrated. This lifts the teaching of the Book to equal rank with the second part of Isaiah, and nearest of our Twelve to the New Testament. The form in which this truth

¹ Cf. with Jonah i. 1, יִיָּי, Josh. i. 1, 1 Sam. i. 1, 2 Sam. i. 1. The corrupt state of Ezek. i. 1 does not admit it as a parallel.

² See below, p. 486.

³ See above, Vol. I, Ch. XIV

⁴ Acts xi 18

is insinuated into the prophet's reluctant mind, by contrasting God's pity for the population of Nineveh with Jonah's pity for his gourd, suggests the methods of our Lord's teaching, and invests the book with the morning air of that high day which shines upon His parables.

One other remark. In our effort to appreciate this lofty gospel we labour under a disadvantage. That is our modern sense of humour. Some figures in which our author conveys his truth cannot but appear grotesque. How many have missed the spirit of the book in amusement or offence at its curious details! Even in circles in which the acceptance of its literal interpretation is demanded as a condition of belief in its inspiration, the story has served as a subject for humorous remarks. This is inevitable if we take it as history. But we shall find that one advantage of the theory, which treats the Book as parable, is that the features, which appear grotesque, are traced to the popular poetry of the writer's time and shown to be natural. When we prove this, we shall be able to treat the scenery of the book as we do that of some early Christian fresco, in which, however rude or untrue to nature, we feel an earnestness and a success in expressing the moral essence of a situation that are not always present in art more skilful or correct.

I. THE DATE OF THE BOOK

Jonah ben-Amittai, from Gath-hepher¹ in Galilee, came forward in the beginning of the reign of Jeroboam II to announce that the king would regain the lost territories of Israel from the Pass of Hamath to the

¹ Cf. Gittah-hepher, Josh. xix. 13, by some held to be El Meshhed 3 miles N.E. of Nazareth. Jonah's tomb is pointed out there.

Dead Sea.¹ He flourished about 780, and had this book been by himself we should place it first of the Twelve, nearly a generation before that of Amos. But the Book neither claims to be by Jonah, nor gives proof of coming from an eye-witness of the adventures it describes,² nor even from a contemporary of the prophet. On the contrary, one verse implies that when it was written Nineveh had ceased to be a great city.³ Now Nineveh fell in 606 B.C.⁴ In ancient history no collapse of an imperial city was so sudden or complete.⁵ We therefore date the Book of Jonah after 606, when Nineveh's greatness had become, as to the Greek writers, a tradition.

A late date is also proved by the language of the Book. This not only contains Aramaic elements which have been cited to support the argument for a northern origin in the time of Jonah⁶ but a number of words and constructions which we find in the Old Testament, some in the later and some only in the latest writings.⁷

¹ 2 Kings xiv. 25.

² Cf. Kuenen, *Einl.*, II, 417, 418.

³ iii. 3: היתה, *was*.

⁴ See above, pp. 21 f., 95 ff.

⁵ Cf. George Smith, *Assyrian Discoveries*, p. 94; Sayce, *Ancient Empires of the East*, p. 141. Cf. previous note.

⁶ As, *e.g.*, by Volck, article 'Jona' in Herzog's *Real-Encycl.*²: the use of שָׁל for אָשֶׁר, as, *e.g.*, in the very early Song of Deborah. But the same occurs in many late passages: Eccles. i. 7, 11, ii. 21, 22, etc., Psalms cxxii, cxxiv, cxxxv. 2, 8, cxxxvii. 8, cxlvi. 3.

⁷ A. Grammatical constructions: i. 7, בְּשִׁלְמִי; 12, בְּשִׁלִּי: that בשל has not altogether displaced באשר König (*Einl.*, 378) thinks proof of the date of Jonah in the early Aramaic period. iv. 6, the use of לוֹ for the accusative, cf. Jer. xl. 2, Ezra viii. 24; seldom in earlier Hebrew, 1 Sam. xxiii. 10, 2 Sam. iii. 30, especially when the object stands before the verb, Isa. xi. 9 (this may be late), 1 Sam. xxii. 7, Job v. 2; but continually in Aramaic, Dan. ii. 10, 12, 14, 24, etc. The first personal pronoun אנִי (five times) occurs oftener than אֲנֹכִי (twice), just as in all exilic and post-exilic writings. The numerals, ii. 1, iii. 3, precede the noun, as in earlier Hebrew.

B. Words: מִנָּה in Pi. is a favourite with our author, ii. 1, iv. 6, 8;

Scarcely less decisive are apparent quotations and echoes of passages in the Old Testament, mostly later than the historical Jonah, and some later than the Exile.¹ If it were proved that the Book of Jonah quotes from Joel that would set it to a very late date—probably about 300 B.C., the period of the composition of Ezra-Nehemiah, with the language of which its own shows affinity.² This would leave time for its reception into the Canon of the Prophets, closed by

elsewhere in O.T. Hebrew only in Dan. i. 5, 10, 11, 1 Chron. ix. 29, Ps. lxi. 8; but in O.T. Aramaic מִנָּה, Pi. מִנִּי, occurs in Ezra vii. 25, Dan. ii. 24, 49, iii. 12, etc. סְפִינָה, i. 5, is not elsewhere found in O.T., but is common in later Hebrew and in Aramaic. הִתְעַשֵּׂת, i. 6, *to think*, for the Heb. חָשַׁב, cf. Ps. cxlvi. 4, but Aram. cf. Dan. vi. 4 and Targums. טַעַם in the sense *to order or command*, iii. 7, is found in the O.T. only in the Aramaic passages, Dan. iii. 10, Ezra vi. 1, etc. רָבּוּ, iv. 11, for the earlier רַבְבָּה only in later Hebrew, Ezra ii. 64, Neh. vii. 66, 72, 1 Chron. xxix. 7 (Hosea viii. 12, Kethibh is suspected), שָׁתָה, i. 11, 12, only in Ps. cvii. 30, Prov. xxvi. 20. עָמַל, iv. 10, instead of the usual יָנַע. *God of Heaven*, i. 9, only in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 23, Ps. cxxxvi. 26, Dan. ii. 18, 19, 44, and frequently in Ezra and Nehemiah.

¹ In ch. iv. are echoes of the story of Elijah's depression in 1 Kings xix, though the alleged parallel between Jonah's tree (iv. 8) and Elijah's bush seems forced. iv. 9 is thought, not conclusively, to depend on Gen. iv. 6, and יהוה אלהים has been referred to its frequent use in Gen. ii f. More important are the parallels with Joel: iii. 9 with Joel ii. 14a, and the attributes of God in iv. 2 with Joel ii. 13. But which is the original?

² Kleinert assigns the book to the Exile; Ewald to the 5th or 6th century; Driver to the 5th (*Introd.*⁶, 301); Orelli to the last Chaldean or first Persian age; Vatke to the 3rd century. These assign to after the Exile: Cheyne (*Theol. Rev.*, XIV, p. 218, cf. 'Jonah' in the *Encycl. Brit.*), König (*Einl.*), W. R. Smith, Kuenen, Wildeboer, Budde, Cornill, Farrar, etc. Hitzig brings it down to the Maccabean age, which is impossible if the prophetic canon closed in 200 B.C., and seeks its origin in Egypt, 'that land of wonders,' on account of its fabulous character, the description of the east wind as חֲרִישִׁית (iv. 8), and the name of the gourd, קִיקִיּוֹן, Egyptian *kiki*. But such a wind and plant were found outside Egypt. Nowack dates the book after Joel; Kautsch (*Heil. Schrift des A.T.*, II, 43 ff.) between 400–200 B.C., but rather later than earlier in this period because of the Aramaic influence. He denies a later date in view of the acquaintance of Jesus, son of Sirach (xliv. 10) with the Book.

200 B.C.¹ Had the book been later it would have fallen, like Daniel, within the Hagiographa.

2. THE CHARACTER OF THE BOOK

Nor does this book, written centuries after Jonah had passed away, claim to be history. On the contrary, it offers to us marks of the parable or allegory. We have, first, the residence of Jonah for the conventional period of three days and three nights in the belly of the fish, a story not only extraordinary and sufficient to provoke the suspicion of allegory, but apparently woven, as we shall see,² from the materials of a myth known to the Hebrews. We have also the very general account of Nineveh's conversion, in which there is not even the attempt to describe any precise event. The absence of precise data is conspicuous throughout the Book. 'The author neglects a multitude of things, which he would have been obliged to mention had history been his principal aim. He says nothing of the sins of which Nineveh was guilty,³ nor of the journey of the prophet to Nineveh, nor mentions the place where he was cast out, nor the name of the Assyrian king. In any case, if the narrative were intended to be historical, it would be incomplete by the frequent fact, that circumstances necessary for the connection of events are mentioned later than they happened, and only where attention has to be directed to them as having already happened.'⁴ We find, too, trifling discrepancies, from which some⁵ have attempted to prove

¹ See above, Vol. I, p. 5.

² Below, pp. 511 ff.

³ Contrast the treatment of foreign states by Elisha, Amos and Isaiah, etc.

⁴ Abridged from pp. 3 and 4 of Kleinert's *Introduction to the Book of Jonah* in Lange's Series of Commentaries. Eng. ed., Vol XVI.

⁵ Köhler, *Theol. Rev.*, Vol. XVI; Böhme, *Z.A.T.W.*, 1887, pp. 224 ff.

the presence of more than one story in the composition of the Book, but which are due to the licence a writer allows himself when he is telling a tale and not writing a history. Above all, there is the abrupt close to the story at the very moment at which its moral is obvious.¹ All these are symptoms of the parable—so obvious and natural, that we sin against the intention of the author, and the Spirit which inspired him, when we interpret the book as real history.²

3. THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

The purpose of this parable is clear. It is not, as some maintain,³ to explain why the judgements of God

¹ Indeed, throughout the book the truths it enforces are always more pushed to the front than the facts.

² Nearly all who accept the late date of the book interpret it as parabolic. See an article by Dr. Dale in *Expositor*, Fourth Series, VI, July, 1892, pp. 1 ff. Cf. C. H. H. Wright, *Biblical Essays* (1886), pp. 34-98.

³ Marck (quoted by Kleinert): 'Scriptum est magna parte historicum sed ita ut in historia ipsa lateat maximi vaticinii mysterium, atque ipse fatis suis, non minus quam effatis vatem se verum demonstret.' Hitzig thinks that this is why it has been placed in the Canon of the Prophets next the unfulfilled prophecy against Edom. But by the date Hitzig assigns to the book the prophecy against Edom was in a fair way to fulfilment. Riehm (*Theol. Stud. u. Krit.*, 1862, pp. 413 f.): 'The practical intention of the book is to instruct concerning the proper attitude to prophetic warnings'; these, though genuine words of God, may be averted by repentance. Volck (art. 'Jona' in Herzog's *Real-Encycl.*): 'Jonah's experience is characteristic of the prophetic profession. 'We learn from it (1) that the prophet must perform what God commands, however unusual; (2) that even death cannot nullify his calling; (3) that the prophet has no right to the fulfilment of his prediction, but must leave it in God's hand.' Vatke (*Einl.*, 688) maintains that the book was written in an apologetic interest, when Jews expounded the prophets and found this difficulty, that all predictions had not been fulfilled. 'The author teaches: (1) since the prophet cannot withdraw from the Divine commission, he is not responsible for the contents of his predictions; (2) he often announces Divine purposes which are not fulfilled because God takes back the threat, when repentance follows:

and the predictions of His prophets were not always fulfilled—though this becomes clear by the way. The purpose, patent from first to last, is to illustrate the mission of prophecy to the Gentiles, God's care for them, and their susceptibility to His word. More correctly, it is to enforce this truth upon a prejudiced and thrice-reluctant mind.¹

Whose was this reluctant mind? In Israel after the Exile were very different feelings with regard to the future and the obstacle which heathendom interposed between Israel and the future. There was the feeling of outraged justice, with the conviction that God's kingdom could not be established save by the overthrow of the kingdoms of this world. We have seen that conviction in the Book of Obadiah. But the nation, which cherished the visions of the Great Seer of the Exile,² could not help producing men with hopes about the heathen of a different kind—who felt that Israel's mission to the world was not one of war, but of service in these high truths of God and of His Grace committed to herself. Between the two parties it is certain there was much polemic, for we find this still bitter in the time of our Lord. And some think that while Esther, Obadiah and other writings of the centuries after the Return represent one side of this polemic, which demanded the overthrow of the heathen, the Book of

(3) his honour is not hurt when a threat is not fulfilled, and the inspiration remains unquestioned.'

To all which there is an answer, in the fact that, had the book been meant to explain unfulfilled prophecy, the author would not have chosen as an instance a judgement against Nineveh, because, when he wrote, the early predictions of Nineveh's fall had been fulfilled to the letter.

¹ So even Kimchi; and De Wette, Delitzsch, Bleek, Reuss, Cheyne, Wright, König, Farrar, Orelli, etc. So virtually Nowack. Ewald's view is different: that the fundamental truth of the book is that 'true fear and repentance bring salvation from Yahweh.'

² Isa. xl ff.

Jonah represents the other side, and in the reluctant prophet pictures such Jews as proclaimed the destruction of the enemies of Israel, and yet like Jonah were not without the lurking fear that God would disappoint their predictions and leave the heathen room for repentance.¹ Their dogmatism could not resist the impression of how long God had spared the oppressors of His people, and the author of the Book of Jonah cunningly sought these joints in their armour to insinuate the points of his doctrine of God's goodwill for nations beyond the covenant. This is ingenious and plausible. But in spite of the cleverness with which it is argued that the details of the story of Jonah are adapted to the temper of the Jewish party who desired vengeance on the heathen, it is not necessary to suppose that the Book was the produce of mere polemic. The Book is too simple and too grand for that. Those appear more right who conceive that the writer had in view, not a Jewish party, but Israel as a whole in their national reluctance to fulfil their Divine mission to the world.² Of them God had said: *Who is blind but My servant, or deaf as My messenger whom I have sent? . . . Who gave Jacob for a spoil and Israel to*

¹ So virtually Kuenen, *Einl.*, II, 423; Smend, *Lehrbuch der A.T. Religionsgeschichte*, pp. 408 f., and Nowack.

² That the book is a historical allegory is a very old theory, Hermann v. d. Hardt (*Enigmata Prisci Orbis*, 1723: cf. *Jonas in Cartharia, Israel in Carthio*, 1718, in Vatke, *Einl.*, p. 686) found in the book a political allegory of Manasseh led into exile, and converted, while the last two chapters represent the history of Josiah. That the book was symbolic in some way of the conduct and fortunes of Israel was a view familiar in Great Britain during the first half of last century: see Preface to Eng. translation of Calvin on Jonah (1847). Kleinert (*op. cit.*, p. 488) was one of the first to expound the symbolising of Israel in Jonah. Then came the article in *Theol. Review* (XIV, 1877, pp. 214 ff.) by Cheyne, following Bloch's *Studien z. Gesch. der Sammlung der althebräischen Litteratur* (1876); but adding the explanation of the great fish from Hebrew mythology (see below). Von Orelli quotes Kleinert with approval.

*the robbers? Did not Yahweh, He against whom we have sinned?—for they would not walk in His ways, neither were obedient to His law.*¹ Of such a people Jonah is the type. Like them he flees from the duty God has laid upon him. Like them he is, beyond his own land, cast for a period into a living death, and like them rescued only to exhibit once more an ill-will to believe that God had any fate for the heathen save destruction. According to this view Jonah's disappearance in the sea and the great fish, and his ejection upon land symbolise the Exile of Israel and their restoration to Palestine.

In proof of this view it has been pointed out that, while the prophets frequently represent the tyrants of Israel as the sea or the sea-monster, one has described the nation's exile as its swallowing by a monster, whom God forces at last to disgorge his living prey.² The full illustration of this will be given in Ch. XXXVI on 'The Great Fish and What it Means.' Here it is only necessary to mention that the metaphor was borrowed, not, as alleged, from some Greek, or other foreign, myth, which, like that of Perseus and Andromeda, had its scene in the neighbourhood of Joppa, but from a Semitic mythology which was known to the Hebrews, and the materials of which were frequently employed by other writers in the Old Testament.³

¹ Isa. xlii. 19-24.

² Jer. li. 34, 44 f.

³ So Gesenius, De Wette, and even Knobel, but see especially F. C. Baur in Ilgen's *Zeitschrift* for 1837, p. 201. Kuenen (*Einl.*, 424) and Cheyne (*Theol. Rev.*, XIV) rightly deny traces of Greek influence on Jonah, and this is generally agreed in.

Kleinert (*op. cit.*, p. 10) points to the proper source in Hebrew mythology: 'The sea-monster is no unusual phenomenon in prophetic typology. It is the secular power appointed by God for the scourge of Israel and of the earth (Isa. xxvii. 1)'; and Cheyne (*Theol. Rev.*, XIV) points out how Jer. li. 34, 44 f. forms the link between the story of Jonah and the popular mythology.

Why, of all prophets, Jonah should have been selected as the type of Israel, is a question not hard to answer. In history Jonah appears only as concerned with Israel's reconquest of her lands from the heathen. Did the author of the book say: I will take such a man, to whom tradition attributes no outlook beyond Israel's territories, for none could be so typical of Israel, narrow, selfish and with no love for the world outside herself? Or did the author know some story about a journey of Jonah to Nineveh, or some discourse by Jonah against the great city? Elijah went to Sarepta, Elisha took God's word to Damascus; may there not have been, though we are ignorant of it, some connection between Nineveh and the labours of Elisha's successor? Thirty years after Jonah appeared, Amos proclaimed the judgement of Yahweh upon foreign nations, with the destruction of their capitals; about the year 755 he enforced, as equal with Israel's own, the responsibility of the heathen to the God of righteousness. May not Jonah, almost the contemporary of Amos, have denounced Nineveh in the same way? Would not some tradition of this serve as the nucleus of fact, round which our author built his allegory? It is possible that Jonah proclaimed doom upon Nineveh; yet those who are familiar with the prophesying of Amos, Hosea, and, in his younger days, Isaiah, will deem it hardly probable. For why do all these prophets exhibit such reserve in naming Assyria, if Israel had already through Jonah entered into relations with Nineveh? We must admit our ignorance of the reasons which led our author to choose Jonah as a type of Israel. We can only conjecture that it may have been because Jonah was a prophet whom history identified with Israel's narrower interests. If, during subsequent centuries, a tradition had risen of Jonah's journey

to Nineveh or of his discourse against her, such a tradition has probability against it.

A more definite origin for the book than any yet given has been suggested by Professor Budde.¹ The Second Book of Chronicles refers to a *Midrash of the Book of the Kings*² for particulars concerning King Joash. A *Midrash*³ was the expansion, doctrinal or homiletic, of a passage of Scripture, and frequently took the form, dear to Orientals, of parable or invented story about the subject of the text. We have examples of Midrashim among the Apocrypha, in the Books of Tobit and Susannah and in the Prayer of Manasseh, the same as is probably referred to by the Chronicler.⁴ That the Chronicler used the *Midrash of the Book of the Kings* as material for his own book is obvious from the form of the latter and its adaptation of the historical narratives of the Book of Kings.⁵ The Book of Daniel may also be reckoned among the Midrashim, and Budde now proposes to add to their number the Book of Jonah. It may be doubted whether this distinguished critic is right in supposing that the Book formed the Midrash to 2 Kings xiv. 25 ff. (the author being desirous to add to the expression there of Yahweh's pity upon Israel some expression of His pity upon the heathen), or that it was extracted just as it stands, in proof of which Budde points to its abrupt beginning and end. We have seen another reason for the latter ;⁶ and it is improbable that the Midrashim, so largely the basis of the Books of Chronicles,

¹ *Z.A.T.W.*, 1892, pp. 40 ff.

² 2 Chron. xxiv. 27.

³ Cf. Driver, *Introduction*, I, 497.

⁴ 2 Chron. xxxiii. 18.

⁵ See Robertson Smith, *Old Test. in the Jewish Church*, pp. 140, 154.

⁶ See above, p. 489.

shared that spirit of universalism which inspires the Book of Jonah.¹ But we may believe that it was in some Midrash of the Book of Kings that the author of the Book of Jonah found the basis of the latter part of his immortal work, which too clearly reflects the fortunes and conduct of all Israel to have been wholly drawn from a Midrash upon the story of the individual prophet Jonah.

4. OUR LORD'S USE OF THE BOOK

We have seen that the Book of Jonah is not history, but the enforcement of a profound religious truth nearer to the level of the New Testament than anything else in the Old, and cast in the form of Christ's parables. The proof of this can be made clear only by the detailed exposition of the book. There is, however, one other question, relevant to the argument. Christ Himself has employed the story of Jonah. Does His use of it involve His authority for the opinion that it is a story of real facts?

Two passages of the Gospels contain the words of our Lord upon Jonah: Matt. xii. 39-41, and Luke xi. 29, 30.² *A generation, wicked and adulterous, seeketh a*

¹ Cf. Smend, *A.T. Religionsgeschichte*, p. 409, n. 1.

² Matt. xii. 40—*For as Jonah was in the belly of the whale three days and three nights, so shall the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights*—is not in Luke xi. 29, 30, which confines the sign to the preaching of repentance, and is suspected as an intrusion both for this and other reasons, *e.g.*, that ver. 40 is superfluous and does not fit in with 41, which gives the proper explanation of the sign; that Jonah, who came by his burial in the fish through neglect of his duty and not by martyrdom, could not therefore in this respect be a type of our Lord. On the other hand, 40 is not unlike another reference of our Lord to His resurrection, John ii. 19 ff. Yet, even if 40 be genuine, the vagueness of the parallel drawn in it between Jonah and our Lord makes for the opinion that in quoting Jonah our Lord was

sign, and sign shall not be given it, save the sign of the prophet Jonah. . . . The men of Nineveh shall stand up in the Judgement with this generation, and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, a greater than Jonah is here. This generation is an evil generation : it seeketh a sign ; and sign shall not be given it, except the sign of Jonah. For as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so also shall the Son of Man be to this generation.

These words, of course, are compatible with the opinion that the Book of Jonah is a record of fact. The only question is, are they also compatible with the opinion that the Book of Jonah is a parable? Many say No ; and allege that those of us who hold this opinion are denying, or at least ignoring, the testimony of our Lord ; or that we take away the force of the parallel which He drew. This is a question of interpretation, not of faith. We do not believe that our Lord had any thought of confirming or not confirming the historic character of the story. His purpose was one of exhortation, and we feel the grounds of that exhortation to be just as strong when we have proven the Book of Jonah to be a parable. Christ is using an illustration : it matters not whether that be drawn from the realms of fact or of poetry. Again and again in their discourses to the people men use illustrations and enforcements drawn from traditions of the past. Do we, even when the historical value of these traditions is *very* ambiguous, give thought to the question of their historical character? We never think of it. It is enough that the tradition is popularly accepted and familiar. And to our Lord we cannot

not concerned about quoting facts, but simply gave an illustration from a well-known tale. Matt. xvi. 4, where the sign of Jonah is again mentioned, does not explain the sign.

deny that which we claim for ourselves.¹ Even conservative writers admit this. In his Introduction to Jonah von Orelli says: 'It is not, indeed, proved with conclusive necessity that, if the Resurrection of Jesus was a physical fact, Jonah's abode in the fish's belly must also be just as historical.'²

Upon the general question of our Lord's authority in matters of criticism, His own words with regard to personal questions may be quoted: *Man, who made Me a judge or divider over you? I am come not to judge . . . but to save.* Such matters our Lord leaves to ourselves, and we decide them by our reason, our common-sense, and our loyalty to truth—of all of which He is the Creator, and of which we shall have to render to Him an account at the last. Let us remember this, and we shall employ them with liberty and reverence. *Bringing every thought into subjection to Christ* is just using our knowledge, our reason, and every other gift which He has given us, with the accuracy and courage of His own Spirit.

5. THE UNITY OF THE BOOK

The next question is that of the Unity of the Book. Attempts have been made to prove from discrepancies,

¹ Suppose we tell slothful people that theirs will be the fate of the man who buried his talent, is this to commit us to the belief that the persons of Christ's parables actually existed? Or take the homiletic use of Shakespeare's dramas—'as Macbeth did,' or 'as Hamlet said.' Does it commit us to the historical reality of Macbeth or Hamlet? Any preacher would resent being bound by such an inference. And if we resent this for ourselves, how chary we should be about seeking to bind our Lord by it.

² Eng. trans. of *The Twelve Minor Prophets*, p. 172. Consult also Farrar's judicious paragraphs on the subject: *Minor Prophets*, pp. 234 f.

some real and some alleged, that the book is a compilation of stories from different hands. But these essays are too artificial to have obtained adherence from critics; and the few real discrepancies of narrative from which they start are due, as we have seen, rather to the licence of a writer of parable than to difference of authorship.¹

In the question of the unity of the Book, the Prayer or Psalm in ch. ii offers a problem of its own, consisting as it does almost entirely of passages parallel to others in the Psalter. Besides a number of religious phrases, which are too general for us to say

¹ The two attempts to divide the Book of Jonah are by Köhler in the *Theol. Rev.*, XVI, 139 ff., and by Böhme in the *Z.A.T.W.*, VII, 224 ff. Köhler insists on traits of an earlier age (rude conception of God, no sharp boundary between heathens and Hebrews, etc.), and finds traces of a late revision: lacuna in i. 2; hesitation in iii. 1, in the giving of the prophet's commission, which is not pure Hebrew; change of three days to forty (cf. LXX); mention of unnamed king and his edict, superfluous after the popular movement; beasts sharing in mourning; also in i. 5, 8, 9, 14, ii. 2, דָּבָר, iii. 9, iv. 1-4, as disturbing context; also the building of a booth is superfluous, and invented to account for Jonah remaining forty days instead of the original three; iv. 6, לְחַיֵּית צֶלֶם for an original לֹא יִהְיֶה צֶלֶם = *to offer him shade*; 7, the worm, תּוֹלַעַת, due to a copyist's change of the following בַּעֲלֹת. Withdrawing these, Köhler gets an account of the sparing of Nineveh on repentance following a sentence of doom, which, he says, reflects the position of the city of God in Jeremiah's time, and was due to Jeremiah's opponents, who said in answer to his sentence of doom: If Nineveh could avert her fate, why not Jerusalem? Böhme's conclusion, starting from the alleged contradictions in the story, is that four hands have had to deal with it. A sufficient answer is given by Kuenen (*Eintl.*, 426 ff.), who, after analysing the dissection, says that its 'improbability is immediately evident.' With regard to the inconsistencies which Böhme alleges in ch. iii between ver. 5 and vv. 6-9, Kuenen remarks that 'all that is needed for their explanation is a little good-will'—a phrase applicable to other difficulties raised with regard to O.T. books by critical attempts even less irrational than those of Böhme. Cornill calls Böhme's hypothesis absurd; Marti dismisses it and takes the Book as a unity save for ii. 2-10.

that one prayer has borrowed them from another,¹ there are several unmistakeable repetitions of the Psalms.²

And yet the Psalm of Jonah has strong features, which, so far as we know, are original. The horror of the great deep has nowhere in the Old Testament been described with such power and conciseness. So far the Psalm is not a mere string of quotations, but a living unity. Did the author of the Book insert it where it stands? Against this it has been urged that the Psalm is not the prayer of a man inside a fish, but of one who on dry land celebrates a deliverance from drowning, and that if the author of the narrative himself had inserted it, he would rather have done so after ver. 11, which records the prophet's escape from the fish.³ And a usual theory is that a later editor, having found the Psalm ready-made and in a collection where it may have been attributed to Jonah,⁴ inserted it after ver. 2, which records that Jonah did pray from the belly of the fish, and inserted it there the more readily, because it seemed right for a Book which had found its place among the Twelve Prophets to contribute, as the others did, some discourse of the prophet whose name it bore.⁵ This, however, is not probable. Whether the original author found the Psalm ready to his hand or made it, there is a great deal to be said

¹ *To Thy holy temple*, vv. 5 and 8 : cf. Psalm v. 8, etc. *The waters have come round me to my very soul*, ver. 6 : cf. Psalm lxix. 2. *And Thou broughtest up my life*, ver. 7 : cf. Psalm xxx. 4. *When my soul fainted upon me*, ver. 8 : cf. Psalm cxlii. 4, etc. *With the voice of thanksgiving*, ver. 10 : cf. Psalm xlii. 5. The reff. are to the Heb. text.

² Cf. ver. 3 with Psalm xviii. 7 ; ver. 4 with Psalm xlii. 8 ; ver. 5 with Psalm xxxi. 23 ; ver. 9 with Psalm xxxi. 7, and ver. 10 with Psalm l. 14.

³ Budde, as above, p. 494.

⁴ De Wette, Knobel, Kuenen.

⁵ Budde, Marti who dates its insertion in the second century.

for the opinion of the earlier critics,¹ that he himself inserted it, and just where it stands. For, from the standpoint of the writer, Jonah was already saved when he was taken up by the fish—saved from the deep into which he had been cast by the sailors, and the dangers of which the Psalm so vividly describes. However impossible it be for us to conceive of the compilation of a Psalm (even though full of quotations) by a man in Jonah's position,² it was consistent with the standpoint of a writer who had just affirmed that the fish was expressly *appointed by Yahweh* in order to save his penitent servant from the sea. To argue that the Psalm is an intrusion is therefore not only unnecessary, but betrays failure to appreciate the standpoint of the writer. Given the fish and the Divine purpose of the fish, the Psalm is intelligible and appears at its proper place. It were more reasonable to argue that the fish itself is an insertion. Besides, as we shall see, the spirit of the Psalm is national; in conformity with the truth underlying the book, it is a Psalm of Israel as a whole.

If this be correct, we have the Book of Jonah as it came from the hands of its author. The text is in good condition, due to the ease of the narrative and its late date. The Greek version exhibits the usual proportion of clerical errors and mistranslations,³ omis-

¹ *E.g.*, Hitzig.

² Luther says of Jonah's prayer, that 'he did not speak with these exact words in the belly of the fish, nor placed them so orderly, but he shows how he took courage, and what sort of thoughts his heart had, when he stood in such a battle with death.' We recognise in this Psalm 'the recollection of the confidence with which Jonah hoped towards God, that since he had been rescued in so wonderful a way from death in the waves, He would also bring him out of the night of his grave into the light of day.'

³ ii. 5, B has *λαόν* for *ναόν*; i. 9, for *עברי* it reads *עברי*, and takes the ' to be abbreviation for *יהוה*; ii. 7, for *בערי* it reads *בעלי*, and translates *κατοχοι*; iv. 11, for *ישׁ-בה* it reads *ישבו*, and translates *κατοικοῦσι*.

sions¹ and amplifications,² with some variant readings³ and other changes that will be noted in the verses themselves.

¹ i. 4, נדולה, perhaps rightly omitted before following נדול; i. 8, B omits the clause לנו to באשר, probably rightly, for it is needless, though supplied by Codd. A, Q; iii. 9, one verb, μετανοήσε, for ישוב ונחם, probably correctly, see below.

² i. 2, ἡ κραυγὴ τῆς κακίας for רעתם; ii. 3, εὐδὲν μου after יהוה; ii. 10, in obedience to another reading; iii. 2, εὐδὲν προσθεν after קראיה; iii. 8, לאמר.

³ iii. 4, 8.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE GREAT REFUSAL

JONAH I

WE have now laid clear the lines upon which the Book of Jonah was composed. Its purpose is to illustrate God's grace to the heathen in face of His people's refusal to fulfil their mission to them. The author was led to achieve this purpose by a parable, through which the prophet Jonah moves as the symbol of his recusant, exiled, redeemed and still hardened people. It is the Drama of Israel's career, as the Servant of God, in the most pathetic moments of that career. A nation is stumbling on the highest road nation was ever called to tread.

*Who is blind but My servant,
Or deaf as My messenger whom I have sent ?*

He that would read this Drama aright must remember what lies behind the Great Refusal which forms its tragedy. The cause of Israel's recusancy was not only wilfulness or cowardly sloth, but the horror of a world given over to idolatry, the paralysing sense of its force, of its persecutions endured for centuries, and of the long famine of Heaven's justice. These it was which had filled Israel's eyes too full of fever to see her duty. Only when we feel, as the writer himself felt,

this tragic background to his story are we able to appreciate the exquisite gleams which he flashes across it: the magnanimity of the heathen sailors, the repentance of the heathen city, and, lighting from above, God's pity upon the dumb multitudes.

The parable or drama divides itself into three parts: The Prophet's Flight and Turning (ch. i); The Great Fish and What it Means (ch. ii); and The Repentance of the City (chs. iii and iv).

The chief figure of the story is Jonah, son of Amittai, from Gath-hepher in Galilee, a prophet identified with that turn in Israel's fortunes, by which she began to defeat her Syrian oppressors, and win back her own territories—a prophet of revenge, and from the most bitter of the heathen wars. i. 1, 2: *And the word of Yahweh came to Yonah, the son of 'Amittai, saying, Up, go to Nineveh, the Great City, and call out against her, for her evil is come up before Me. But he arose to flee.* It was not the length of the road, nor the danger of declaring Nineveh's sin to her face, which turned him, but the instinct that God intended by him something else than Nineveh's destruction; and this instinct sprang from his knowledge of God Himself. *Ah now, Yahweh, was not my word, while I was yet upon mine own soil, at the time I made ready to flee to Tarshish, this—that I knew that Thou art a God gracious and tender and long-suffering, plenteous in love and relenting of evil?*¹ Jonah interpreted the Word which came to him by the Character which he knew to be behind the Word. This is a significant hint upon the method of revelation.

It would be rash to say that, in imputing even to the historical Jonah the fear of God's grace upon the

¹ iv. 2.

heathen, our author were guilty of an anachronism.¹ We have to do, however, with a greater than Jonah—the nation herself. Though perhaps Israel little reflected upon it, the instinct can never have been far away that some day the grace of Israel's God might reach the heathen too. Such an instinct, of course, must have been almost stifled by hatred born of heathen oppression, as well as by the scorn which Israel came to feel for heathen idolatries. But we may believe that it haunted even those dark periods in which revenge upon the Gentiles seemed most just, and their destruction the only means of establishing God's kingdom in the world. We know that it moved uneasily even beneath the rigour of Jewish legalism. For its secret was that faith in the essential grace of God, which Israel gained early and never lost, and which was the spring of every new conviction and every reform in her development. With a subtle appreciation of all this, our author imputes the instinct to Jonah from the outset. Jonah's fear, that after all the heathen may be spared, reflects the restless apprehension even of the most exclusive of his people—an apprehension which by the time our book was written seemed to be still more justified by God's long delay of doom upon the tyrants whom He had promised to overthrow.

But to the natural man in Israel the possibility of

¹ For the grace of God had been the formative influence in the early religion of Israel (Vol. I, p. 18), and Amos, only thirty years after Jonah, emphasised the moral equality of Israel and the Gentiles before the God of righteousness. Given these premises of God's essential grace and the moral responsibility of the heathen to Him, the conclusion could never have been far away that in the end His essential grace must reach the heathen. In sayings not later than the eighth century it is foretold that Israel shall become a blessing to the world. Our author may have been guilty of no anachronism in imputing such a foreboding to Jonah.

the heathen's repentance was still so abhorrent, that he turned his back upon it. i. 3: *Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from before Yahweh.* In spite of arguments to the contrary, the most probable location of Tarshish is the generally accepted one, a Phœnician colony at the other end of the Mediterranean. In any case it was far from the Holy Land; and by going there the prophet would put the sea between himself and his God. To the Hebrew imagination there could not be a flight more remote. Israel was essentially an inland people. They had come out of the desert, and had practically never yet touched the Mediterranean. They lived within sight of it, but from ten to twenty miles of foreign soil intervened between their mountains and its stormy coast. The Jews had no traffic upon the sea, nor (but for one sublime instance¹ to the contrary) had their poets ever employed it except as a symbol of arrogance and restless rebellion against the will of God.² It was this popular feeling of the distance and strangeness of the sea which moved our author to choose it as the scene of the prophet's flight from the face of Israel's God. Jonah had to pass, too, through a foreign land to get to the coast: upon the sea he would only be among heathen. This was to be part of his conversion. *He went down to Yapho, and found a ship going to Tarshish, and paid the fare thereof, and embarked on her to get away with her crew³ to Tarshish—away from before Yahweh.*

The scenes which follow are vivid: the sudden wind sweeping down from the hills on which Jonah believed he had left his God; the tempest; the behaviour of the ship, so alive with effort that the story attributes

¹ 'Second Isaiah'; see ch. lx.

² See the author's *Hist. Geog. of the Holy Land*, pp. 131-134.

³ Heb. *them*.

to her the feelings of a living thing—*she thought she must be broken*; the despair of the mariners, driven from the unity of their common task to the hopeless diversity of their idolatry—*they cried every man unto his own god*; the jettisoning of the tackle of the ship to lighten her (as we should say, they let the masts go by the board); the worn-out prophet fast asleep in the hull; the group gathered on the heaving deck to cast the lot; the passenger's confession, and the new fear which fell upon the sailors from it; the reverence with which these rude men ask the advice of him, in whose guilt they feel not the offence to themselves, but the sacredness to God; the awakening of the prophet's better self by their generous deference; how he counsels to them his own sacrifice; their reluctance to yield to this, and their return to the oars with increased perseverance for his sake. But neither their generosity nor their efforts avail. The prophet again offers himself, and as their sacrifice he is thrown into the sea.

ii. 4-15. *And Yahweh cast a wind¹ on the sea, and there was a great tempest,² and the ship threatened³ to break up. And the sailors were afraid, and cried every man unto his own god; and they cast the tackle of the ship into the sea, to lighten it from upon them. But Jonah had gone down to the bottom of the ship and lay fast asleep. And the captain of the ship⁴ came to him, and said to him, What art thou doing asleep? Up, call on thy God; peradventure the God will take thought of us, that we perish not. And they said every man to his neighbour, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know on whose account this evil is come upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. And they said to him, Tell us now,⁵*

¹ So LXX: Heb. *a great wind*.

² Heb. *on the sea*.

³ Lit. *reckoned or thought*.

⁴ Heb. *ropes*.

⁵ The words *for whose sake is this evil* come upon us do not occur in LXX nor in some Heb. codd., and are unnecessary.

what is thy business, and whence comest thou? what is thy land, and from what people art thou? And he said to them, A Hebrew am I, and I worship Yahweh, the God of Heaven,¹ who made the sea and the dry land. And the men feared with a great fear, and said to him, What is this thou hast done? (for the men knew he was fleeing from the presence of Yahweh, because he had told them).² And they said to him, What are we to do to thee that the sea cease raging against us? For the sea was surging higher and higher. And he said to them, Take me and throw me into the sea; so shall the sea cease raging against you: for I am sure that it is on my account that this great tempest is upon you. And the men laboured with the oars³ to bring the ship back to land, and they could not, for the sea grew more and more stormy against them. So they called on Yahweh and said, O Yahweh, let us not perish, we pray Thee, for the life of this man, nor bring innocent blood upon us: for Thou art Yahweh, Thou hast done as it pleased Thee. Then they took up Jonah and cast him into the sea, and the sea stilled from its raging. And the men were in great awe of Yahweh and made sacrifice to Yahweh, and vowed vows.

How real it is and how noble! We see the storm, and then forget the storm in the joy of that generous contest between heathen and Hebrew. But the glory of the passage is the change in Jonah himself. It has been called his punishment and the conversion of the heathen. Rather it is his own conversion. He meets again not only God, but the truth from which he fled. He not only meets that truth, but he offers his life for it.

¹ Wellhausen suspects this form of the Divine title.

² Winckler's removal of ver. 10 to after 7 is groundless (Marti). Some take because he had told them as a gloss.

³ Lit. *dug in*.

The art is consummate. The writer will first reduce the prophet and the heathen whom he abhors to the elements of their common humanity. As men have sometimes seen upon a mass of wreckage or on an ice-floe wild animals, by nature foes to each other, reduced to peace through their common danger, so we descry the prophet and his natural enemies upon the straining and breaking ship. In the midst of the storm they are equally helpless, and they cast for all the lot which has no respect of persons. But from this the story passes quickly, to show how Jonah feels not only the kinship of these heathen with himself, but their susceptibility to the knowledge of his God. They pray to his God as the God of the sea and the dry land ; while we may be sure that the prophet's confession, and the story of his relation to that God, forms as powerful an exhortation as any he could have preached in Nineveh. At least it produces the effects he has dreaded. In these sailors he sees heathen turned to the fear of the Lord. All that he has fled to avoid happens before his eyes and through his own mediation.

The climax is reached, however, neither when Jonah feels his common humanity with the heathen nor when he discovers their awe of his God, but when in order to secure for them God's sparing mercies he offers his own life. *Take me up and cast me into the sea ; so shall the sea cease from raging against you.* After their pity for him has wrestled with his honest entreaties, he becomes their sacrifice.

In this story perhaps the most instructive passages are those which lay bare the method of God's revelation. When we were children this was shown to us in pictures of angels bending from heaven to guide Isaiah's pen, or to cry Jonah's commission to him through a trumpet.

And when we grew older, although we learned to dispense with that machinery, yet its infection remained, and our conception of the process was mechanical still. We thought of the prophets as of another order of things ; we released them from our own laws of life and thought, and we paid the penalty by losing interest in them. But the prophets were human, and their inspiration came through experience. The source of it, as this story shows, was God. Partly from His guidance of their nation, partly through close communion with Himself, they received new convictions of His character. Yet they did not receive these mechanically. They spake neither at the bidding of angels, nor like heathen prophets in trance or ecstasy, but as *they were moved by the Holy Ghost*. And the Spirit worked upon them first as the influence of God's character,¹ and second through the experience of life. God and life—these are all the postulates for revelation.

At first Jonah fled from the truth, at last he laid down his life for it. So God still forces us to the acceptance of new light and the performance of strange duties. Men turn from these, because of sloth or prejudice, but in the end they have to face them, and then at what a cost ! In youth they shirk a self-denial to which in some storm of later life they have to bend with heavier, and often hopeless, hearts. For their narrow prejudices and refusals, God punishes them by bringing them into pain that stings, or into responsibility for others that shames, these out of them. The drama of life is thus intensified in interest and beauty ; characters emerge heroic and sublime.

' But, oh the labour,
O prince, the pain ! '

¹ *I knew how Thou art a God gracious.*

Sometimes the neglected duty is at last achieved only at the cost of a man's breath ; and the truth, which might have been the bride of his youth and his comrade through a long life, is recognised by him only in the features of **Death**.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE GREAT FISH AND WHAT IT MEANS—THE PSALM

JONAH II.

AT this point in the tale appears the Great Fish. i. 17: *And Yahweh prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.*

After the natural story which we have followed, this verse obtrudes itself with a shock of unreality and grotesqueness. What an anticlimax ! say some ; what a clumsy intrusion ! So it is if Jonah be taken as an individual. But if we keep in mind that he stands here, not for himself, but for his nation, the difficulty and grotesqueness disappear. It is Israel's ill-will to the heathen, Israel's refusal of her mission, Israel's embarkation on the stormy sea of the world's politics, which we have had described as Jonah's. Upon her flight from God's will there followed her Exile, and from her Exile, which was for a set period, she came back to her own land, a people still, and still God's servant to the heathen. How was the author to express this national death and resurrection ? In conformity with the language of his time, he had described Israel's turning from God's will by her embarkation on a stormy sea, the symbol of the prophets for the tossing heathen world that was ready to engulf her ; and

now to express her exile and return he sought metaphors in the same rich poetry of the popular imagination.

To the Israelite who watched from his hills that stormy coast on which the waves hardly ever cease breaking in their impotent restlessness, the sea was a symbol of fury and futile defiance to the will of God. The mythology of the Semites had filled it with turbulent monsters, snakes and dragons, who wallowed like its waves, helpless against the bounds set to them, or rose to war against the gods in heaven and the great lights they had created ; but a god slays them and casts their carcasses for meat and drink to the thirsty people of the desert.¹ It is a symbol of the perpetual war between light and darkness ; the dragons are the clouds, the slayer the sun. A variant form, which approaches that of Jonah's great fish, is still found in Palestine. In May, 1891, I witnessed at Hasbeya, on the skirts of Hermon, an eclipse of the moon. When the shadow began to creep over her disc, there rose from the village a hideous din of drums, metal pots and planks beaten together ; guns were fired, and there was much shouting. I was told that this was done to terrify the great fish which was swallowing the moon, and make him disgorge her.

Now these purely natural myths were applied by the prophets and poets of the Old Testament to the illustration, not only of their God's sovereignty over the storm and the night, but of His conquest of the heathen powers who had enslaved His people.² Isaiah

¹ For the Babylonian myths see Sayce's Hibbert Lectures ; George Smith's *Assyrian Discoveries* ; Gunkel, *Schöpfung u. Chaos* ; and H. Zimmern in Part II of *K.A.T.*³

² Passages in which this class of myths are taken in a physical sense are Job iii. 8, vii. 12, xxvi. 12, 13, etc., etc. ; and passages in which it is applied politically are Isa. xxvii. 1, li. 9 ; Jer. li. 34, 44 ; Psalm lxxiv, etc. See Gunkel, *Schöpfung u. Chaos*.

had heard in the sea the confusion and rage of the peoples against the bulwark which Yahweh set around Israel;¹ but it is chiefly from the time of the Exile onward that the myths themselves, with their monsters and the prey of these, are applied to the great heathen powers and their captive, Israel. One prophet describes the Exile of Israel as the swallowing of the nation by the monster, the Babylonian tyrant, whom God forces at last to disgorge its prey. Israel says:² *Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon hath devoured me³ and crushed me,³ . . . he hath swallowed me up like the Dragon, filling his belly, from my delights he hath cast me out.* But Yahweh replies:⁴ *I will punish Bel in Babylon, and bring out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed. . . . My people, go ye out of the midst of her.*

It has been justly remarked by Cheyne that this passage may be considered as the link between the original form of the myth and the application of it in the story of Jonah.⁵ To this the objection might be offered that in the story of Jonah the *great fish* is not represented as the means of the prophet's temporary destruction, like the monster in Jeremiah li, but rather as the vessel of his deliverance.⁶ This is true, yet it only means that our author has further adapted the plastic material offered him by this much transformed myth. But we do not depend for proof upon the comparison of a single passage. Let the student of the Book of Jonah read carefully the passages of the Old Testament, in which the sea or its monsters rage against Israel's God, or are harnessed and led about by Him;

¹ Ch. xvii. 12-14.

² Heb. margin, LXX, Syr.; Heb. text, *us*.

³ Cheyne, *Theol. Rev.*, XIV. See above, pp. 491 f. notes.

⁴ See above, p. 499, on the Psalm of Jonah.

⁵ Jer. li. 34.

⁶ Jer. li. 44, 45.

or still more those passages in which His conquest of these monsters is made to figure His conquest of the heathen powers,¹—and the conclusion will appear irresistible that the story of the *great fish* and of Jonah the type of Israel is drawn from the same source. Such a solution of the problem has one great advantage. It relieves us of the grotesqueness which attaches to the literal conception of the story, and of the necessity of those painful efforts for accounting for a miracle which have distorted the common-sense and even the orthodoxy of many commentators.² We are dealing with poetry—a poetry inspired by one of the most sublime truths of the Old Testament, but whose figures are drawn from the legends and myths of the people to whom it is addressed. To treat this as prose is not only to sin against the common-sense God has given us, but against the simple and obvious intention of the author. It is blindness both to reason and to Scripture.

These views are confirmed by an examination of the Psalm or Prayer which is put into Jonah's mouth while he is yet in the fish. We have seen grounds for believing that the Psalm belongs to the author's own plan, and from the beginning appeared where it does now.³ But we may also point out how, in consistence with its context, this is a Psalm, not of an individual Israelite, but of the nation as a whole. It is largely drawn from the national liturgy.⁴ It is full of cries which we know, though they are expressed in the singu-

¹ Above, p. 512, n. 2.

² It is interesting to notice how many commentators (*e.g.*, Pusey, and the English edition of Lange) who take the story in its individual meaning, and as miraculous, try to minimise the miracle by quoting stories of fishes who have swallowed men, even men in armour, whole, and in one case at least have cast them up alive! For a revival of these stories see *The Daily Telegraph*, 17 February, 1928.

³ See above, pp. 499 f.

⁴ See above, p. 499, nn. 1 f.

lar number, to have been used of the whole people, or at least of that pious portion of them who were Israel indeed. True that in the original portion of the Psalm, and by far its most beautiful verses, we seem to have the description of a drowning man swept to the bottom of the sea. But even here, the colossal scenery and magnificent hyperbole of the language suit not the experience of an individual, but the extremities of that gulf of exile into which a whole nation was plunged. It is a nation's carcass which rolls upon those infernal tides that swirl among the roots of mountains and behind the barred gates of earth. Finally, vv. 8 and 9 are obviously a contrast, not between the individual prophet and the heathen, but between the true Israel, who in exile preserve their loyalty to their God, and those Jews who, forsaking their *covenant-love*, lapse to idolatry. We find many parallels to this in exilic and post-exilic literature.

After the introduction the Psalm is in quatrains in the *Ḳinah* or elegiac measure with an additional couplet at the close.

ii. 1. *And Jonah prayed to Yahweh, his God, from the belly of the fish and said :*

ii. 2. *Out of my anguish I called upon Yahweh
And He did answer me,
From the belly of Sheol I cried for help,
Thou heardest my voice.*

3. *Thou hadst cast me¹ into the heart of the seas,
And the flood rolled around me,
All of Thy breakers and billows
Over me passed.²*

¹ Heb. here inserts *a depth* which as it has no preposition or article and overloads the metre must be a gloss (Marti).

² This couplet is quoted from Ps. xlii. 8.

ii. 4. *Then I said, I have been hurled
From before Thine eyes,
How¹ ever again shall I gaze
On Thy holy Temple ?*

5. *The waters enwrapped me to the life,
The deep rolled about me,
The tangle was bound to my head*

6. *At the roots of the hills.*

*I was gone down to earth with her bars
Behind me for ever.²
But Thou broughtest my life from destruction,
Yahweh my God !*

7. *When my soul had fainted upon me
I thought upon Yahweh,
And my prayer came in unto Thee
To Thy holy Temple.*

8. *They that observe vain idols
Their leal love³ forsake,
9. But I to the sound of singing
Will sacrifice to Thee.*

*What I have vowed I will perform :
Salvation is Yahweh's.*

10. *And Yahweh spake to the fish and it threw up
Jonah on the dry land.*

¹ For דָּא read דָּא and with LXX take interrogatively.

² Heb. *To the earth her bars.* Marti proposes לְאֶרֶץ תַּחְתִּיזוֹת אֱלֹהִים, עוֹלָם 'in die tief unterste erde, zu dem Totenvolk der Urzeit,' ingenious but quite uncertain and unnecessary.

³ Or *due allegiance.* Heb. הִסָּדָם, for which some propose מִמְסָקָם, *their refuge.*

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE REPENTANCE OF THE CITY

JONAH III

HAVING learned his moral kinship with the heathen and offered his life for some of them, Jonah receives a second command to go to Nineveh. He obeys, but with his prejudice as strong as though it had not been humbled, nor met by Gentile nobleness. The first part of his story appears to have no consequences in the second.¹ But this is consistent with the writer's purpose to treat Jonah as if he were Israel. For, upon their return from Exile, and in spite of their new knowledge of themselves and the world, Israel still cherished their grudge against the Gentiles.

iii. 1-4. *And the word of Yahweh came to Jonah the second time, saying, Up, go to Nineveh, the great city, and call unto her with the call which I shall tell thee. And Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, as Yahweh said. Now Nineveh was*² *a city great before God, three days' journey through and through.*³ *And Jonah began by*

¹ Only in iii. 1, *second time*, and in iv. 2 are there any references from the second to the first part of the book.

² Proof that the writer wrote after Nineveh's fall.

³ The diameter rather than the circumference seems intended by the writer, if we can judge by his sending the prophet *one day's journey through the city*. Some, however, take the circumference as meant, and this agrees with the computation of sixty English miles as the girth of the greater Nineveh described below.

going through the city one day's journey, and he called and said, Forty¹ days more and Nineveh shall be overturned.

Opposite Mosul, the well-known emporium of trade on the right of the Upper Tigris, two artificial mounds lift themselves from the otherwise level plain. The more northerly takes the name of Kujundschik, or 'little lamb,' after the Turkish village which couches pleasantly on its north-eastern slope. The other is called in the popular dialect Nebi Yunus, 'Prophet Jonah,' after a mosque dedicated to him, which was once a Christian church; but the official name is Nineveh. These mounds are bound to each other on the west by a broad brick wall, which extends beyond both, and is connected north and south by other walls, with a circumference in all of about nine English miles. The interval, including the mounds, was covered with buildings, whose ruins enable us to form some idea of what was for centuries the wonder of the world. Upon terraces and substructions of enormous breadth rose storied palaces, arsenals, barracks, libraries and temples. A lavish water system spread in all directions from canals with embankments and sluices. Gardens were lifted into mid-air, filled with rich plants and rare and beautiful animals. Alabaster, silver, gold and precious stones relieved the masses of brick and flashed sunlight from every frieze and battlement. The surrounding walls were so broad that chariots could roll abreast on them. The gates, especially the river gates, were massive.²

All this was Nineveh proper, whose glory the Hebrews envied and over whose fall more than one of their

¹ LXX Codd. B, etc., *three days*; others have the *forty* of the Heb

² A fuller description above on Nahum, pp. 95 ff.

prophets exult. But this was not the Nineveh to which our author saw Jonah come. Beyond the walls were great suburbs,¹ and beyond the suburbs other towns, league upon league of dwellings, so set on the plain as to form one vast complex of population, known to Scripture as *The Great City*.² To judge from the ruins which cover the ground,³ the circumference must have been about sixty miles, or three days' journey. It is these leagues of common dwellings which roll before us in the story. None of those glories are mentioned, of which other prophets speak, but the only proofs offered of the city's greatness are its extent and its population.⁴ Jonah is sent to three days, not of mighty buildings, but of homes and families, to the Nineveh, not of kings and their splendour, but of men, women and children, *besides much cattle*. The palaces and temples he may pass in an hour or two, but from sunrise to sunset he treads the drab mazes where the people dwell.

When we open our hearts for heroic witness to the truth there rush upon them memories of Moses before Pharaoh, of Elijah before Ahab, of Stephen before the Sanhedrim, of Paul upon Areopagus, of Galileo before the Inquisition, of Luther at the Diet. But it takes a greater heroism to face the people than a king, to convert a nation than to persuade a senate. Princes and assemblies stimulate the imagination; they drive to bay the nobler passions of a solitary man. But there is nothing to help the heart, and its courage is all the greater, which bears witness before those masses,

¹ רחבות עיר, Gen. x. 11.

² Gen. x. 12, according to which the Great City included, besides Nineveh, at least Resen and Kelach.

³ And taking the present Kujundschik, Nimrud, Khorsabad and Balawat as the four corners of the district.

⁴ iii. 2, iv. 11.

in monotone of life and colour, that now paralyse the imagination like stretches of sand when the sea is out, and again terrify it like the resistless rush of the flood beneath a hopeless sky.

It is, then, with an art fitted to his high purpose that our author—unlike other prophets, whose aim was different—presents to us, not a great military power : king, nobles and armed battalions : but the vision of monotonous millions.¹ He strips his country's foes of everything foreign, or provocative of envy and hatred, and unfolds them to Israel only in their teeming humanity.

His next step is still more grand. For this teeming humanity he claims the universal human possibility of repentance—that and nothing more.

Under every form and character of human life, beneath all needs and habits, deeper than despair and more native to man than sin itself, lies the power of the heart to turn. It was this and not hope that remained at the bottom of Pandora's Box when every other gift had fled. For this is the indispensable secret of hope. It lies in every heart, needing indeed some dream of Divine mercy, however far and vague, to rouse it ; but when roused, neither ignorance of God, nor pride, nor long obduracy of evil may withstand it. It takes command of the whole nature of a man, and speeds from heart to heart with a force, that spares neither age nor rank nor degree of culture. This primal human right is all our author claims for the men of Nineveh. He has been blamed for telling an impossible thing, that a whole city should be converted at the call of a single stranger ; and others have started in his defence and quoted cases in which large

¹ Compare the Book of Jonah with the Book of Nahum.

Oriental populations have been stirred by the preaching of an alien in race and religion ; and then it has been replied, ' Granted the possibility, granted the fact in other cases, yet where in history have we trace of this alleged conversion of all Nineveh ? ' and some scoff, ' How could a Hebrew make himself articulate in one day to those Assyrian multitudes ? '

How long, O Lord, must Thy poetry suffer from those who can only treat it as prose ? On whatever side they stand, sceptical or orthodox, they are equally pedants, quenchers of the spiritual, creators of unbelief.

Our author, let us understand, makes no attempt to record an historical conversion of this vast heathen city. For its men he claims only the primary human possibility of repentance ; expressing himself not in this abstract way, but as Orientals, to whom an illustration is ever a proof, love to have it done—by story or parable. With fine reserve he has not gone further ; but only told into the prejudiced faces of his people, that out there, beyond the Covenant, in the world lying in darkness, there live, not beings created for ignorance and hostility to God, elect for destruction, but men with consciences and hearts, able to turn at His Word and to hope in His Mercy—that to the ends of the world, and even on the high places of unrighteousness, Word and Mercy work as they do within the Covenant.

The fashion in which the repentance of Nineveh is described is natural to the time of the writer. It is a national repentance and though swelling upwards from the people is confirmed and organised by the authorities ; for we are still in the Old Dispensation, when the picture of a complete repentance could hardly be otherwise conceived. And the beasts are made to share its observance, as in the Orient they

shared and still share in funeral pomp and trappings.¹ It may have been, too, a personal pleasure to our writer to record the part of the animals. Later on he tells us that for their sake also God had pity upon Nineveh.

iii. 5-10. *And the men of Nineveh believed upon God, and called a fast, and from the greatest of them even to the least of them they put on sackcloth. And word came to the king of Nineveh, and he rose off his throne, and cast his mantle from upon him, and put on sackcloth and sat in the dust. And he sent criers to say in Nineveh:—*

By Order of the King and his Nobles, thus: Man and beast, oxen and sheep, shall not taste anything, neither eat nor drink water. But let them clothe themselves² in sackcloth, both man and beast, and call upon God with power, and turn every man from his evil way and from the wrong which they have in hand. Who knows but that God may³ relent and turn from the fierceness of His wrath, that we perish not?⁴ And God saw their doings, how they turned from their evil way; and God relented of the evil which He said He would do to them, and did it not.

¹ Herod., IX, 24; Joel i. 18; Virgil, *Eclogue*, V; *Æneid*, XI, 89 ff.; Plutarch, *Alex.*, 72.

² LXX: *and they did clothe themselves in sackcloth*, and so on.

³ So LXX. Heb. text: *may turn and relent, and turn.*

⁴ The alleged discrepancies have been noticed. As the text stands fast and mourning are proclaimed and begun ere word reaches the king and his proclamation goes forth. The discrepancies might be removed by transferring from ver. 6, *and they cried a fast, and from the greatest of them to the least put on sackcloth*, to the end of ver. 8, with **לֵאמֹר** or **וַיֹּאמְרוּ** to introduce ver. 9. But, as said above (pp. 488 f., 498, n. 1), it is more probable that the text is original, and that inconsistencies in the order are due to its being a parable.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

ISRAEL'S JEALOUSY OF THEIR GOD

JONAH IV

HAVING illustrated the truth, that the Gentiles are capable of repentance unto life, the Book now describes the effect of their escape upon Jonah, and closes by revealing God's full heart upon the matter.

Jonah is angry that Nineveh has been spared. Is this because his own word has not been fulfilled? In Israel there was an accepted rule that a prophet should be judged by the issue of his predictions: *If thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which Yahweh hath not spoken?—when a prophet speaks in the name of Yahweh, if the thing follow not nor come to pass, that is the thing which Yahweh hath not spoken, but the prophet has spoken presumptuously, thou shalt have no reverence for him.*¹ Was it this that stung Jonah? Did he ask for death because men would say that when he predicted Nineveh's overthrow he was false and had not God's word? Of such fears there is no trace. Jonah never doubts that his word came from Yahweh, nor dreads that other men will doubt. There is no hint of anxiety as to his professional reputation. On the contrary, Jonah says that from the first he had the foreboding, from his knowledge of God's character, that Nineveh

¹ Deut. xviii. 21, 22.

would be spared, and that it was from this issue he shrank and fled to go to Tarshish. In short, he could not, either then or now, master his passion that the heathen should be destroyed. His grief, though foolish, is not selfish. He is angry, not at the baffling of his word, but at God's forbearance with the tyrants of Israel.

As in all else, so in this, Jonah is the type of his people. If we can judge from their literature after the Exile, they were not troubled by the non-fulfilment of prophecy, except as one item of what was the problem of their faith—the continued prosperity of the Gentiles. And this was not, what it appears to be in some Psalms, only an intellectual problem or an offence to their sense of justice. Nor could they meet it always, as some of their prophets did, with a supreme scorn of the heathen, and in proud confidence that they themselves were the favourites of God. For the knowledge that God was infinitely gracious haunted their pride; and from the heart of their faith arose a jealous fear that He would show His grace to others than themselves. To us it may be difficult to understand this temper. We have not been trained to believe ourselves an elect people; nor have we suffered at the hands of the heathen. Yet, at least, we have contemporaries and fellow-Christians among whom we may find alive many of the feelings against which the Book of Jonah was written. Take the Oriental Churches of yesterday. Centuries of oppression created in them an awful hatred of the infidel, beneath whose power they were hardly suffered to live. The barest justice called for the overthrow of their oppressors. That these shared a common humanity with them was a sense they had nearly lost. For centuries they had no spiritual intercourse with them; to try to convert a Mohammedan

had been for twelve hundred years a crime. It is not wonderful that Eastern Christians should have lost power to believe in the conversion of infidels, and to feel that anything was due but their destruction. The present writer once asked a cultured and devout layman of the Greek Church, Why then did God create so many Mohammedans ? The answer came fast and hot : To fill up Hell ! Analogous to this were the feelings of the Jews towards the peoples who had conquered and oppressed them. But the jealousy already alluded to aggravated these feelings to a rigour no Christian can ever share. What right had God to extend to their oppressors His love for a people who alone had witnessed and suffered for Him, to whom He had bound Himself by so many exclusive promises, whom He had called His Bride, His Darling, His Only One ? And yet the more Israel dwelt upon that Love the more they were afraid of it. God had been so gracious and long-suffering to themselves that they could not trust Him not to show these mercies to others. In which case, what was the use of their uniqueness and privilege ? What worth was their living any more ? Israel might as well perish.

It is this subtle story of Israel's jealousy of their God, and God's gentle treatment of it, which we follow in the last chapter of the book. The chapter starts from Jonah's confession of a fear of the results of God's lovingkindness and from his persuasion that, as this spread to the heathen, the life of His servant spent in opposition to the heathen was a worthless life ; and the chapter closes with God's own vindication of His Love to His jealous prophet.

iv. 1-3. *It was a great grief to Jonah, and he was angered ; and he prayed to Yahweh and said : Ah now, Yahweh, while I was still upon mine own ground, at the*

time that I prepared to flee to Tarshish, was not this my word, that I knew Thee to be a God gracious and tender, long-suffering and plenteous in love, relenting of evil? And now, Yahweh, take, I pray Thee, my life from me, for for me death is better than life.

In this impatience of life as well as in some subsequent traits, the story of Jonah reflects that of Elijah. But the difference between the two prophets was this, that while Elijah was jealous *for* Yahweh, Jonah was jealous *of* Him. Jonah could not bear to see the love promised to Israel alone, and cherished by her, bestowed upon her heathen oppressors. And he behaved after the manner of jealousy and of the heart that thinks itself insulted. He withdrew, and sulked in solitude, and would take no responsibility nor further interest in his work. Such men are best treated by a caustic gentleness, a little humour, a little rallying, a leaving to nature, and a taking unawares in their own confessed prejudices. All these—I dare to think even the humour—are present in God’s treatment of Jonah. This is natural and beautiful. Twice the Divine Voice speaks with a soft sarcasm: *Art thou very angry?*¹ Then Jonah’s affections, turned from man and God, are allowed their course with a bit of nature, the fresh and green companion of his solitude; and when all his pity for this has been roused by its destruction, that pity is employed to awaken his sympathy with God’s compassion for the city, and he is shown how he has denied to God the same affection which he confesses to be strong in himself. But why try further to expound so clear an argument?

¹ Heb. may be translated either *Dost thou well to be angry?* or *Art thou very angry?* Our versions prefer the *first*, with the *second* in the margin. LXX take the *second*. That this is right is not only proved by its greater suitableness, but by Jonah’s answer, *I am very angry, even unto death.*

iv. 4-II. *But Yahweh said, Art thou very angry?* Jonah would not answer—how lifelike is his silence here—but went out from the city and sat down before it,¹ and there made him a booth and settled beneath it in the shade, till he should see what happened in the city. And Yahweh God prepared a gourd,² and made it grow up above Jonah to be a shade over his head.³ And Jonah rejoiced in the gourd with a great joy. But as dawn came up the next day God prepared a worm, and this⁴ wounded the gourd, that it perished. And it came to pass, when the sun rose, that God prepared a dry east-wind,⁵ and the sun smote on Jonah's head, and he was faint, and begged for himself that he might die,⁶ saying, *Better my dying than my living!* And God said unto Jonah, *Art thou so very angry about the gourd?* And he said, *I am very angry—even unto death!* And Yahweh said: *Thou carest for a gourd for which thou hast not travailed, nor reared it, a thing that came in a night and in a night has perished.⁷ And shall I not care for Nineveh, the Great City,⁸ wherein are more than twelve times ten thousand human beings who know not their right hand from their left, besides much cattle?*

¹ Heb. *the city*.

² קִיקְיוֹן, Egyptian kiki, Ricinus or Palma Christi; p. 487, n. 2

³ Heb. adds *to save him from his evil*—a gloss.

⁴ Heb. *it*.

⁵ חֲרִישִׁית. The Targum implies a *quiet, i.e., sweltering, east wind*.

Hitzig thinks the name is from the season of ploughing and modern proverbs seem to bear this out: *an autumn east wind*. LXX, στυκαίων, Siegfried-Stade: *a cutting east wind*, as if from חֲרֵשׁ. Steiner emends to חֲרִישִׁית, as if from חֲרָם = *the piercing*, poetic of the sun; Böhme, *Z.A.T.W.*, VII, 256, to חֲרִישִׁית, from חֲרַר, *to glow*. Köhler (*Theol. Rev.*, XVI, 143), cf. חֲרָשׁ, *dried clay*.

⁶ Heb. *begged his life, that he might die*.

⁷ Heb. *which was the son of a night, and son of a night has perished*.

⁸ Gen. x. 12.

God has vindicated His love to the jealousy of those who thought that it was theirs alone. And we are left with this vague vision of the immeasurable city, with its multitude of innocent children and cattle, and God's compassion brooding over **all**.

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